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ABSTRACT

Arguing that becoming a successful author requires the ability to write simply, clearly, and forcefully, this book provides practical suggestion for clear and forceful professional writing. Chapters include: (1) "Why Write"; (2) "Finding Topics"; (3) "Getting Started"; (4) "About Style"; (5) "Organizing Articles"; (6) "Using Journals, Libraries and Surveys"; (7) "The Most Common Errors (In Journal Writing); (8) "Communicating with Journal Editors": (9) "Questions Beginners Ask"; (10) "Getting Book Contracts"; (11) "Business Writing"; and (12) "Beyond Luck: Planning for Success." (RS)

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WRITING FOR SUCCESSFUL PUBLICATION

BY KENNETH T. HENSON

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Learn how to:

- Select topics
- Select journals
- Write lead sentences
- Write query letters
- Use questionnaires
- Develop style
- Negotiate contracts

NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE

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A SPECIAL CHAPTER ON BUSINESS WRITING

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WRITING FOR SUCCESSFUL PUBLICATION

KENNETH T. HENSON

CS 212 771

NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE

ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE ON READING AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to all who have participated in my writing classes and workshops, including the hosts and faculties who have permitted me to bring the workshop to their campuses. Your questions and insights have provided for yourselves and for me opportunities to better understand the art of writing for publication. I respect the fact that you recognize the merit in learning to do it right. And when you do it right, you know you can succeed at whatever level you choose.

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I want to express my appreciation to the staff at Phi Delta Kappa for the opportunities they have given me to expand and improve my own writing program. Starting in 1984, former *Kappan* editor **Bob Cole** and current *Kappan* editor **Pauline Gough** have published all of my biennial surveys of journal editors in PDK's premier journal, the *Kappan*. Thanks to **Derek Burleson**, Special Publications Editor, for publishing my *Kappan* fastback *Writing for Professional Publication*.

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For his help editing the original manuscript, I want to thank my good friend **Peter Oliva** whose own dedication to the craft of writing provides a model for other authors. I also appreciate the excellent word processing of **Teresa Barnes** who works magic with the computer.

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THE AUTHOR

Kenneth Henson is a **writer**. His thirteen books were published by D.C. Heath, F.E. Peacock, Longman, Macmillan, McGraw-Hill, Merrill, National Educational Service, Sycamore Press, and Teachers College Press. His more than 100 articles have appeared in two dozen national journals. Since 1984 his articles in the *Kappan* have reported his biennial survey of journal editors. His other articles on writing for publication have appeared in the business journal *Training and Development*, the *NASSP Bulletin*, *The Writer*, and *The Writer's Yearbook*. He is author of the Phi Delta Kappa monograph, *Writing for Publication*.

Kenneth Henson is a **speaker** who has taken his writing workshop to more than 100 cities and campuses nationwide. His week-long Phi Delta Kappa Writing Summer Workshops are offered at Indiana University and San Diego State University.

Kenneth Henson is an **editor.** He has served on the review board of *Action in Teacher Education*, *American Middle School Education*, *The Physics Teacher*, and *The Journal of Teacher Education*. He has served as guest editor of *American Middle School Education*, *Contemporary Education*, *Gateways to Teacher Education*, and *Theory Into Practice*. For his work with several issues of *Theory Into Practice* he received the Ohio State University Distinguished Service Award.

Kenneth Henson is a **researcher.** His grants have produced over one million dollars. One proposal funded

six summer institutes for physics teachers. Another proposal funded a competency-based teacher education program which received the Association of Teacher Educators Distinguished Program Runner-up Award. His studies of journal requirements are now being replicated in other disciplines and in other countries.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One: WHY WRITE 1
1. Reasons to Write 3
2. A Time and Place for Everything 10
3. Tooling Up for the Job 12
4. Taking Inventory 14
Chapter Two: FINDING TOPICS 17
1. Just One Good Topic 17
2. The Dissertation 18
3. Your Job 21
4. Other Occupations 22
5. Reference Books 23
6. Forecasting the Future 25
Chapter Three: GETTING STARTED 29
1. The Right Title 29
2. Selecting Titles for Nonfiction Journal Articles 31
3. Writing The First Sentence 34
4. Paragraphing 37
5. Go Ahead and Write 38
Chapter Four: ABOUT STYLE 42
1. Handicaps that Defeat Would-be Writers 43
2. 18 Reasons Why People Don't Write 43
3. Writing Clearly 47
4. Editing Exercise 48

5. Writing Positively 50
6. Treat Genders Fairly 55
Chapter Five: ORGANIZING ARTICLES 59
1. Organizing Nonfiction Articles 61
2. Achieving Substance 61
3. Showing Application 74
4. Using Subheadings 79
5. Paragraphing 91
6. Paragraph Sequencing 94
Chapter Six: USING JOURNALS, LIBRARIES AND SURVEYS 97
1. Using Journals 97
a. Physical characteristics 97
1. Article length 98
2. Reading level 100
b. Guidelines for authors 100
c. Call for manuscripts 103
d. Coming themes 106
e. Reviewers' Guidelines and Rating Scales 108
2. Using Libraries 111
a. Identifying topics 111
b. Identifying target journals 112
c. Use your own expertise 117
3. Using Surveys 118
Chapter Seven: THE MOST COMMON ERRORS (IN JOURNAL WRITING) 131
1. The Nature of Writing 131
2. Mistakes and Suggestions 132
a. Lack of familiarity with the journal 132
b. Wrong style 136

c. Failure to check for grammatical errors 137
d. Failure to include substance 137
e. Failure to write simply and clearly 140
3. Other Helpful Suggestions 143
a. Select your Target Journals in Advance 143
b. Identify Coming Themes 143
c. Title Correctly 144
d. Opening Paragraph 144
e. Avoid Provincialism 145
f. Check your Manuscript 152
4. Some Final Thoughts 153
Chapter Eight: COMMUNICATING WITH JOURNAL EDITORS 156
1. The Author/Editor Relationship 156
2. The Telephone 157
3. Pick Your Journal 160
4. The Query Letter 163
5. The Cover Letter 170
Chapter Nine: QUESTIONS BEGINNERS ASK 173
1. Why do you write? 173
2. What are the most important suggestions you can make to aspiring writers? 174
3. Have you a favorite success story? 175
4. How do you handle rejections? 177
5. What distinguishes highly successful writers from less successful writers? 178
6. How about multiple submissions? 179
7. How about coauthors? 179
8. Should I use tables and graphs? 180
9. Should I write articles, short stories, or books? . . . 181
10. What advantages are there to writing book reviews? 181

11.What is a *refereed* journal? 181
12. How about vanity publishers? 183
13. How about self-publishing? 184
14. If asked, should I pay a journal for publishing expenses? 185
15. Should I be a specialist or generalist? 185
16. How about colloquialisms? 186
17. Should I use clichés 186
18. Do I need to attend a writer's workshop, and how can I find one? 187
19. Is breaking the rules ever acceptable? 187
Chapter Ten: GETTING BOOK CONTRACTS 190
1. Choosing the Right Book to Write 190
2. Developing a Prospectus 191
3. Chapter Outlines 192
4. Book Description 198
5. Market Description 199
6. Description of the Competition 199
7. Author Description 201
8. Selecting a Publisher 202
9. Send Query Letters 206
10. Query Letters 208
11. The Agent 210
12. Negotiating the Contract 212
Chapter Eleven: BUSINESS WRITING 221
1. Writing Memos 222
a. Memos Should Never Communicate Anger . . . 224
b. Deciding Whether to Write a Memo 226
2. Writing Business Letters 227
3. Preparing Written and Oral Reports 228

a. Herb's Response 228
b. Analysis 229
c. Steps for Preparing Written Reports 230
d. Collecting and Organizing Data 230
e. Side Note for Further Clarification 232
f. Writing the Report 233
g. Suggested Approach 235
h. Delivering the Report 235
i. The Oral Presentation 240
j. Using Handouts 240

Chapter Twelve: BEYOND LUCK: PLANNING FOR SUCCESS 243

1. Managing Each Manuscript 245
a. Identify topic areas 247
b. Identify two sets of journals/ specialized & general 248
c. Matching journals to goals 248
d. Rank your list of journals 248
e. Refine your journal list 250
2. Develop a Tracking System 250
3. Tracking Multiple Manuscripts 253

INDEX 258

LIST OF FIGURES

4-1 Delete the Unnecessary Words

4-2 Effect of Close Editing

4-3 Writing Positively

4-4 Advanced Editing Exercise

4-5 Good Editing is a Step-by-Step Process

4-6 Treating Genders Equally

4-7 Eliminating Sexism through Pluralizing and Restructuring

5-1 Accountability and Performance-Based Programs: Some Pros and Cons

5-2 Middle Schools: Paradoxes and Promises

5-3 State Mandated Accountability Programs: Are they Educationally Sound?

5-4 Corporal Punishment: Ten Popular Myths

5-5 Reforming America's Public Schools

5-6 How to Have the Time You Need

5-7 Discovery Learning

5-8 The Same Structure Shapes Three Similar Articles

5-9 Paragraphing Should be Based on Specific Guidelines Rather than on Intuition

6-1 Graph for Estimating Readability—Extended

6-2 Sample Guidelines to Authors

6-3 Sample "Call for Manuscripts"

6-4 Announcement of Coming Themes

6-5 Rating Scales Raise the Quality of Manuscript Evaluations and simplify Evaluators' Work
6-6 A Systematic Approach to Researching Topics
6-7 Many Excellent Quotations can be Lifted from Books
6-8 Questionnaire to Editors
6-9 Articles Produced as a Result of Re-administering the Survey to Editors
6-10 Cover Letter Mailed with Questionnaire
6-11 Cover Letter Revised to Save Editors Some Time
6-12 Questionnaire to Middle School Teachers
6-13 Articles Based on Questionnaire
7-1 Journals in the Same Field Vary in Complexity (2 Parts)
7-2 Authors Can Give much Enrichment, Substance, and Credibility to their Articles by Referencing Relevant Articles and Books Written by Others in their Field
7-3 Common Mistakes and Recommendations
7-4 Nonfiction Authors Must Help Readers See Ways of Using the Information
7-5 Nonfiction Authors Should Choose Topics that Explain How Others can Use the Information
8-1 Preferences of Business Journals
8-2 Preferences of Education Journals
8-3 How to Write a Query Letter
8-4 Always Address Correspondence to the Current Editor
8-5 Always get the Name of the Journal Exactly Correct
8-6 Sample Query Letter
8-7 Sample Cover Letter
9-1 Refereeing Occurs in Degrees
10-1 Sample Chapter Outline for a *How-to* Book
10-2 More Detailed Contents Outline for a *How-to* Book

10-3 Contents Section in *Self-help* and *How-to* Books that both Entertain and Inform
10-4 College Textbooks and Professional Books Require Detailed Chapter Outlines
10-5 Content Comparison
10-6 Publishers Chart
10-7 Sample Query Letter
10-8 Query Letters Can Be Too Brief
10-9 An Information-Rich Query Letter
10-10 When Signing Book Contracts, Scholars Should Be Sure to Read the Fine Print
11-1 Sample Memo
11-2 Memos Should Specify Deadlines
11-3 Memos that Handle Anger
11-4 Watson Enterprises Mission Statement
11-5 Courtesy Visits and Service Visits
11-6 Responses to Service Requests
11-7 Courtesy Visits
11-8 Increased Number of Visits/Decreased Cost per Visit
11-9 Quarterly Report for Sales and Service Department
12-1 Journal Profile
12-2 Individual Manuscript Tracking Form
12-3 Multiple Tracking System

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PREFACE

Writing for Successful Publication began with a workshop which the author developed and has given to more than one hundred audiences from coast to coast. Having accepted over 800 invitations to emcee ceremonies, a well-known speaker once said that to be a successful speaker you don't have to be the best but you have to be better than most. Directing workshops is even more demanding. People today are busy; and they are consumer-wise. When people pay, they want results—the real thing, the hard facts. **Becoming a successful author requires the ability to write simply, clearly and forcefully. This book delivers by providing the "nuts and bolts" that will enable you to write clearly and forcefully.**

Kenneth Henson, author and coauthor of over one hundred magazine and journal articles and a dozen books published by such companies as Longman, D.C. Heath, Merrill, Macmillan, and McGraw-Hill, knows that directing workshops is even harder than publishing. Workshop audiences aren't in a festive mood; they don't come to be entertained. They have definite needs; and these needs must be met.

Kenneth Henson makes annual tours to several major cities giving this workshop to business people, educators, state and local government employees, entrepreneurs, researchers, practitioners, and people from many professions. Some are beginners; others are already successful writers who are improving their skills. These people think that paying money to learn how to

write better is a good investment, and they think it gives them the right to make specific demands of the speaker. They demand that every minute of every hour is filled with helpful facts that they can take back home and use to improve their success as a writer.

This book is written with these hundreds of demanding people in mind. The author knows that like the workshop participants, the readers of this book want specific, concrete facts. And like the workshop participants, the readers of this book will tell him if he lets them down. And this is good. Your suggestions and comments are welcome. If you find errors or omissions, or if you just want to say "I took your advice and here's what happened," write to me and your name will be placed on a list which already has several hundred addresses. You will then receive an occasional newsletter which announces forthcoming writing workshops and new markets for your manuscripts, and which offers still more concrete suggestions to help you *Write for Successful Publication.*

Chapter One

WHY WRITE

The first trip was memorable. The flight started with an over-booked leg from Indianapolis and led to a schedule bump in Atlanta. But the short delay resulted in an upgrade to first class in Atlanta and an enjoyable ride to Miami, during which I sat across the aisle from a favorite singer, Robert Goulet. A successful interview at the University of Miami promised life in this tropical city with regular, paid, weekend trips to teach courses in the Bahamas.

The first trip to Nassau was all anyone could want and more, considerably more. The tall coconut palms that graced the beaches, the small Christmas palms of uniform height and distance that lined the sidewalks, and the poinsettias in full, red bloom in January clouded the memory of the immediate past filled with dark morning drives to work and old snow—black, carbon-coated snow—and grey skies.

But, the shock of the change paled with the start brought by the flip of the motel room light. A two-foot iguana had also sought a room and had rested itself below the cool window air conditioner.

Dozens of memorable trips would follow, trips to Nassau on Paradise Island and trips to Freeport on the Grand Bahama Island. A few of these trips would be eventful enough to be remembered, such as the day of the iguana and the day we were deplaned at the Miami Airport. The rumor we heard was that the police had received a bomb threat, entered the plane with a couple of German shep-

herd dogs, and removed from the plane not *a* bomb but *two* bombs. (As we wondered about a possible third bomb, the flight to Nassau that morning was memorable.)

And then there was the time that the huge L 1011 reached the edge of the Bermuda Triangle and for seemingly no reason at all began an immediate fall, plummeting like a lead weight almost to the water. Unlike other white-knuckle flights where people get giddy with laughter, on this flight nobody was laughing. Instead, people were screaming and grabbing each other's arms and hands.

Yes, such times were memorable, and they still are. But, these were isolated events. Most of the experiences became routine. The palm trees, the poinsettias, and the dark blue waters that turned a beautiful light green near the white, sandy shores, all became routine and soon were ignored. But the Bahamas offered one thing that would never be ignored or taken for granted. This was the people who inhabited the islands. Some were natives; others were temporary residents, most having come from the former or current colonies of Great Britain. This was evident in their British accents. (It is also a safe generalization since at one time over half of the world was under the British Empire.)

The Bahamians are warm and hospitable. At Christmas they showered me with gifts. Have you ever passed through customs with bottles of rum or frozen lobsters? A jigger of coconut rum put into a batch of pancake mix fills your house with a wonderful aroma. But the quality that made these people so special to me was partially due to my role, for I was their teacher. Although I had lived and taught in the Mother Country, where I discovered an appreciation for books that I had never before seen, I had never witnessed such an unquenchable thirst for knowledge. The year was 1975, and the Bahamas had declared its independence just two years earlier. As a developing

nation, these people knew that the only way they could prosper was through education. Each Saturday, I lectured for eight hours. Throughout the day and even at the end of each day, all 70 students in each class were literally hanging onto the edge of their chairs as they reached out mentally and firmly grasped every concept and every word.

As you read these words, they may be meaningless to you, but to me they are my life, and I shall continue to treasure them. Perhaps this is why for the past decade I have traveled over a quarter of a million miles to deliver writing workshops. Only at writing workshops do I experience the level of intensity that I found in the Bahamas. Only at writing workshops am I able to relate so personally with other kindred spirits who share my excitement, for I know what they want; I know what it can do for them; and I am determined to deliver it.

Reasons to Write

People can be divided into two groups: the talkers and the doers. Some people enjoy just sitting around talking about writing, telling why they don't write for publication. One person said that he doesn't write for publication because "there are just too many mediocre books and articles out there, and I don't want to associate with mediocrity." Others talk a lot about the writing they plan to do, but they never seem to get around to it.

Then there are the doers. Congratulations! Your actions place you in this group. Often the big difference between the two groups is that **serious writers have specific goals to reach through their writing.**

Initially you may not be able to articulate these goals for fear that you may never reach them or for fear that others might be critical, but few goals are ever reached unless they become clear to their pursuers. For this rea-

son, those who are serious about becoming writers must clarify at least to themselves their own reasons for writing.

Unlike being a student or working for a supervisor or boss, writers usually don't have people to spur them on. The world is full of people who dream about becoming something they aren't but who haven't the initiative to do the work that must be done to become whatever they wish to become. Most people who aspire to become writers are aware of some of the benefits of writing. They know that **when you are a writer you are very much your own boss. You can decide *what* you want to write, *when* you want to write it, and even *where* you want to write.** Authors can even choose their audiences. Writing offers opportunity to earn recognition. Few professionals enjoy more admiration than successful writers. Most people also know that **writing offers authors an opportunity to apply their creative talents.** When you write, you invent; and then you share your creation with as many others as possible. **Our society places great value on creativity.**

Some people find that writing helps them clarify their own thinking. As strange as it may sound, they write to find out what they think and to remove inconsistencies in their own thinking. Some professional people, such as college professors, are told that they must publish before they can earn tenure, promotions, or merit pay. Writing is, nevertheless, a proactive endeavor, and nobody can be forced to write. People write because they choose to.

Still others choose to write to earn money. Our society has moved through a period when the main thrust of individuals was to compete with the Joneses, earning more money and buying more goods, to a period when the major thrust was to join and support group movements. Today, the greatest trend among our population is for

individuals to improve their own talents and capabilities. Many people write to improve themselves, an especially admirable goal. In their book *Megatrends 2000,* Naisbitt and Aburdene (1990) offer ten megatrends for the 21st century. Among these is the triumph of the individual.

> The great unifying theme at the conclusion of the 20th century is the triumph of the individual....It is the individual who creates a work of art, embraces a political philosophy, bets a life savings on a new business, inspires a colleague or a family member to succeed, immigrates to a new country, has a transcendent spiritual experience. It is an individual who changes him- or herself before attempting to change society. Individuals today can leverage change far more effectively than most institutions.

All of these goals are worthwhile and admirable, but writing is also hard work. At times it is lonely. So if you are going to spend your time writing, do it right and make it pay off. **The main purpose of this book is to help you prepare to write articles and books that will get published and sell, earning you money and recognition**. These are immensely practical objectives, and so long as your writing is honest, they are perfectly honorable reasons for learning to write. This book is written with these people in mind, people who are committed to self-improvement and people who want to enhance their professional and personal lives.

But even people who write for such practical reasons must acknowledge that some people seek to learn to write because they hold a deep respect for the beauty that lives in eloquent writing. Pragmatists are likely to question the wisdom of spending their time and energy with only the goal of making something pretty, yet even they can appreciate knowing that others are willing to devote their writing to this end. To conclude that writers of prose seek only this end, would be wrong. Many of the most eloquent writers have deep-seated purposes, and they use their writing skills to achieve these purposes. For example, we

should appreciate the forceful nature of Eric Sevareid's writing. He had been serving as news correspondent throughout the United States' involvement in World War II when he wrote the following lines:

> The last battle would be fought just across the river....The Germans did not know that this was the last day when the endless war would still be a war. Tomorrow the great German raid against the human race would be all over save for the meaningless odds and ends....The whole situation was selfishly satisfying, and I savored it. I, an ordinary man with a name and origin of which Caesar (Hitler) was ignorant, was standing a couple hundred yards from his camp knowing the secret of his fate and the fate of his empire. And he didn't know. I, one of his intended slaves, was so much mightier than he. I, who had never kicked a Jew, or looted a village, or burned a bank, or stolen a country, or killed anything larger than a hare, was standing with empty hands looking into his final citadel, possessed of the biggest, brightest fact in this moment in eternity—the fact that the terror and tyranny of our times would come to an end this night....Now that I am here, I'll represent the whole human race, all the millions of people who haven't done the things Caesar has done.

These few lines reveal the awesome power that rests in the hands of a skilled writer. Few activities offer us power to represent the entire human race. Writing does even more; the skilled writer can actually change the values and the behaviors of thousands, or even millions, of people.

If you value writing enough to pursue it, as you obviously do, you will appreciate the words that John Steinbeck set to paper when he was asked to deliver a speech to the Kansas State Teachers Association:

> My eleven-year-old son came to me recently and, in a tone of patient suffering, asked, "How much longer do I have to go to school?"
>
> "About fifteen years," I said.
>
> "Oh, Lord!" he said despondently. "Do I have to?"

"I'm afraid so. It's terrible and I'm not going to try to tell you it isn't. But I can tell you this—if you are very lucky, you may find a teacher, and that is a wonderful thing."

"Did you find one?"

"I found three," I said.

My three had these things in common-- they all loved what they were doing. They did not tell—they catalyzed a burning desire to know....

I shall speak only of my first teacher because, in addition to other things, she was very precious. She aroused us to shouting, bookwaving discussion. She had the noisiest class in school and didn't even seem to know it. We could never stick to the subject, geometry or the chanted recitation of the memorized phyla.

Our speculation ranged the world. She breathed curiosity into us so that we brought in facts or truths shielded in our hands like captured fireflies. She left her signature on us, the signature of the teacher who writes on minds. I suppose that, to a large extent, I am the unsigned manuscript of that high school teacher. What deathless power lies in the hands of such a person.

I can tell my son who looks forward with horror to fifteen years of drudgery that somewhere in the dusty dark a magic may happen that will light up the years. If he is very lucky....

I have come to believe that a great teacher is a great artist and there are as few as there are any other great artists. It might even be the greatest of the arts since the medium is the human mind and spirit.

Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* begins with an example of a powerful beginning.

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had every-

> thing before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going the other way.

Dickens had a way of getting the reader's attention and holding it. This skill is an absolute must for successful writers. A special chapter is included in this book to help you develop the skill of holding the reader's attention.

At the beginning of *The Auctioneer,* Joan Samson used her words like an artist who carefully manipulates a brush to paint a picture. Her picture is full of motion and details:

> THE FIRE ROSE in a perfect cone as if suspended by the wisp of smoke that ascended in a straight line to the high spring sky. Mim and John dragged whole dry saplings from the brush pile by the stone wall and heaved them into the flames, stepping back quickly as the dead leaves caught with a hiss.
>
> Four-year-old Hildie heard the truck coming even before the old sheep dog did. She scampered to the edge of the road and waited impatiently. It was Gore's truck, moving fast, rutting deeply in the mud and throwing up a spray on either side. John and Mim converged behind Hildie, each taking stock of what might be wrong to bring the police chief out to the last farm on the road. Bob Gore swung himself out and hooked his thumbs in the pocket of his jeans. He shifted from foot to foot for a moment as if his great belly were seeking a point of equilibrium. Gore had a taste for two things—trouble and gossip. By either route, he could talk away an afternoon without half trying. John glanced over his shoulder at the fire.

Somewhere out there, someone may learn to write as eloquently as John Steinbeck, as forcefully as Charles Dickens, or as descriptively as Joan Samson. But most of us will never reach those levels of superb writing. Fortunately, though, you don't have to write eloquently or elegantly to become a successful writer and reach your goals. This book stresses simple, direct, and clear writing. The experts know that such skills give the author the ability

to write assertively and forcefully. **This book provides the knowledge and opportunities needed to become a highly skilled author.** We should all take comfort in knowing that **there are always good markets for important information that is clearly written.**

Opportunity Comes Often – Disguised as Hard Work

Although the payoffs for writing are clear, the investment that one makes to become a writer is far less frequently understood. Writing is hard work even to those who enjoy it. It requires self-discipline and self-denial. Becoming a successful, published writer requires becoming a good writer. Publishing is a buyer's market and the writer is the seller. In publishing, the supply always far exceeds the demand. Publishers are always flooded with manuscripts, many of which are mediocre or worse. To succeed, you must compete with, and outperform, many others who are just as bright and just as knowledgeable as you. The one saving grace is that few would-be writers are willing to invest the time and energy required to transform their mediocre skills into the sharp, refined skills that are required to compete in this buyer's market. For this reason, all serious writers should rejoice. By taking time to develop sharp skills and by taking time to revise, improve, and polish your manuscripts, **you can dramatically reduce the astronomical odds that less serious writers face.**

Most beginning writers enter workshops or read books with the idea that *I'm here for the facts, just the facts. I am reasonably bright and all I need or want is to get the "nuts and bolts" about writing.* Filling this need is what this book is all about. You will, indeed, get from it those facts and skills needed to succeed. And succeed you can, and at the level you choose.

A Time and Place for Everything

A well-known verse in the *Old Testament* says that there is a time for everything. Writing is no exception. Knowing where and when to apply your energy to this pursuit strongly affects your degree of success. My work with hundreds of aspiring writers in dozens of workshops and courses has produced many excellent questions. Of these many questions, the most frequently asked (and one of the most difficult to answer) is, *How do you find time to write?* In fact, this question was so frequently asked that it prompted me to write an article for *The National Businesswoman* titled "How to Find the Time You Need."

Finding time to write is actually a misnomer. We speak of finding and losing time as if time were a tangible object. When we travel, we speak of *making up* time that was *lost* because of mechanical failures or inclement weather. Actually, time—perhaps the most valuable commodity of all—is never created by humans, nor is it found. Usually, when we say that we should find time to do something, what we mean is that we should give that activity more of our attention. To do this we must learn to schedule our activities more carefully, assigning more time to those activities that are more important.

The remark, *I don't have time to write,* actually means that I have committed all of my time to other things or I have not yet learned how to effectively budget my writing time. Surely, in our busy world, this is no strange feeling to any of us. Yet, at this juncture you must make a decision. You must either choose to continue doing all the things that you are currently doing, in which case you should dismiss the idea of writing, or **you must** carefully examine your weekly calendar and **replace some of the less important activities, reassigning this time to writing for publication.** (This may mean giving up an hour a day in the coffee room.) For most of us, it requires giving up a few hours of T.V. each week.

Once individuals do replace a few of these mundane activities with writing, they often realize that the activities that were chosen to relax them are far less relaxing than writing. Paradoxically, **writing for publication is both exhilarating and relaxing**. Have you ever noticed after a hard day's work that an evening spent in front of the T.V. tube leaves you exhausted? Why? Because you weren't physically tired. You were emotionally drained; and passive recovery is slow. Writing is different. It puts your brain in gear, enabling your frayed nerves to heal. Writers say that writing stimulates them mentally while relaxing them emotionally. **Writing is good therapy; it lets you express yourself**. Trading an evening of reruns for an evening of writing may be the best decision you've made in a long time.

When is the Best Time to Write?

Some writers do most of their work late at night, while others prefer to get up very early and write for a few hours before the day's obligations begin. Some writers carefully schedule a combination of mornings, afternoons, and evenings.

Your own schedule should be determined by first considering your personal preferences. If you begin nodding and dozing off by 8 or 9 p.m., you may wish to try writing at other times. But, if you are the type who likes to stay up late and sleep in late, an evening writing schedule may suit you best.

Next, check your daily obligations. Your present job may dictate that some times are unavailable for you to write. (Don't worry. Some of the most prolific writers are shut off from writing from 8 to 5 daily). You may have to block out time for carpooling the kids to and from school, helping with homework, preparing meals, cleaning the house, washing the clothes, or cutting the grass. As you assign yourself time for writing you should also **consider whether you need large blocks of time** and whether

you need to be **free from noise or disruptions**. Such concerns may restrict your available *quality* writing times to late evenings or early mornings. One final but important suggestion: Be realistic! **Do not over-schedule the time you set for writing. Then, honor your commitment**. Save time for tennis, or golfing, or exercising, or reading, or watching that T.V. show that you enjoy most. If you are married, get the support of other family members. Let everyone know your writing schedule, and when the phone rings during your assigned writing time, let someone else answer it and say that you are not presently free to come to the phone. Other disruptions such as uninvited guests and door-to-door salespersons or charity workers can destroy your writing time. Taking time to solicit your family's cooperation can help ward off such interruptions while also impressing on your family members the importance of their respect for your writing time.

In addition to planning writing time into their weekly schedule, successful writers know how to capture additional valuable writing time. A writing friend who lives in New York and frequently travels to the West Coast has been accused of praying for delays. For her, the airport becomes a writing office. Such discipline has led this professor, housewife, and mother of six children to author some 20 books and 200 articles. Other writers take similar advantage of their daily trips to work on commuter planes and trains.

Tooling Up for the Job

Having a definite amount of time set aside each week is indispensable to most successful writers. Yet, the success of these writing sessions hinges on the writer's having the proper tools for the intended job. The importance of having the proper tools available is easy to understand if you have ever tried to repair a machine or cook a meal

without the necessary equipment. As with any job, writing requires a few tools that are common to all writing jobs. Because of how they think and work, different writers require some tools that may offer little importance to other writers. Following is a list of tools that, in addition to office supplies, proper lighting, and solitude, some writers consider indispensable:

1. Typewriter or word processor
2. Dictionary
3. Thesaurus
4. Book of quotations
5. Books in the writer's special field of study
6. Journals in the writer's special field of study
7. Style manuals
8. Grammar books
9. Publishers' guides

One writer explained the significance of having these tools on hand at the time he sits down to write. He said that to him writing is like digging a well. He explained that only a few decades ago most wells were dug by human hands. To begin working, the digger first had to climb carefully down into the well, and, when finished for the morning or afternoon, the digger had to climb back out of the well. Much energy and time were spent entering and exiting the well; therefore, the efficient well digger was sure to have the necessary tools waiting at the bottom of the well. Like the well digger, **the writer must have all the necessary tools waiting.** As trite as this may appear, having to leave the office to sharpen a pencil or fetch paper or a dictionary, often leads to diversions that delay and prevent the writer from getting on with the real task at hand—writing.

The exact location of your office may be dictated by several physical realities. For example, your house or apartment may be too small to afford space for writing at home, or a baby or toddler may render your home environment impossible for serious writing, or you may not personally possess the reference books and journals that you need when you write. A local library, therefore, may be your best writing office. Some writers use more than one location to write. These writers have a portable office housed in their briefcase. The number of portable offices has increased by several-fold in the last decade, especially due to the invention of the laptop computer. The next time you are on a plane or commuter train, notice the number of workers who carry their offices in their briefcases.

Taking Inventory

So far, this book has been quite blunt. It says that **successful writing is hard work. It requires self-discipline and sacrifice, and the rejection rates for many journals and book publishers are astronomical**. This book says that serious writers must give up some leisure activities. They must schedule time for writing and they must discipline themselves to honor that schedule. To many people, these sacrifices appear foolish. Such individuals often criticize dedicated writers. For all this discipline and hard work the writer may get little more than criticism. Remember, it's a buyer's market and the odds for success are indeed small.

But this book has also said that **successful writing is an activity that you can learn and master**; and having done so, it can be the means of attaining a variety of personal and professional goals. Among these are earning money, advancing professionally, being creative, and being your own boss. Furthermore, these goals are within the average individual's reach if that individual is willing to demonstrate the

self-discipline needed to master and use good writing skills. It even says that **you can learn how to increase the odds** of getting your manuscript accepted. The remainder of this book will help you master and use good writing skills. Use this book to gather the nuts-and-bolts knowledge of writing for publication. Use it to develop those skills needed to become a successful writer. Use it to reach your personal and professional goals.

Recapping the Major Points

This chapter has introduced several important points. The following are well worth remembering:

1. Competition among writers is keen. To succeed, writers must write excellently.
2. Good writers are self-made, not born. By learning a few hard facts, you can master the skills needed to succeed in writing.
3. Successful writers are organized. They have designated times and places for writing.
4. In our busy society, nobody *makes* or *finds* the time to write. Successful writers assign a higher priority to this activity.
5. Clear goals give writers direction and incentive.
6. Self-discipline and self-motivation characterize successful writers. You are the only one who can give yourself the kick in the pants that is needed to get started.

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Chapter Two

FINDING TOPICS

"A man would do well to carry a pencil in his pocket, and write down the thoughts of the moment. Those that come unsought for are commonly the most valuable, and should be secured, because they seldom return."

—*Roger Bacon*

Just One Good Topic

A former editor of a prominent journal tells the following story:

> I was in Chicago making a speech on the topic, *Writing for Publication.* At the time, I was saying how *easy* it is for anyone to identify publishable topics; and I made the statement, "All you need is *one* good topic. You don't need an unlimited number of ideas. All you need is one." It was precisely at this time when a small lady in the audience—very timid, yet serious and determined, raised her hand. What she said was the bravest thing I've ever heard. She struck straight to the heart of the *fear* that all writers, both new and experienced, feel at some time. In an almost inaudible whisper, she said, "But what if you don't have one good idea?" Then my hand went up and my mouth opened, because that's what speaking is all about. You always say *something* whether or not you have anything worth saying. Then I was stunned. For I realized that I didn't have an answer for that question. "What if you don't have one good idea?" So, I paused momentarily and with my hand raised high, I said, "Ahmmm. Let's take a break." And we did.

Later, the speaker confessed that he worried throughout the break because he didn't have an answer for this question. "What if you *don't* have one good idea?" Many professors can remember occasions when they as young instructors or assistant professors went into their offices for one purpose and one alone: to write. Knowing that their pending tenure and their future promotion to the assistant, associate, or full professor rank depended on their writing manuscripts and having them accepted for publication in recognizable journals, there they sat with pen in hand searching the boundaries of their minds for topics. These people felt that same desperate and lonely feeling that the speaker's participant expressed. Often they did not have even one good idea for a topic! Now, when others ask, "Where do you get your ideas for topics?" these seasoned professors understand the courage that is required to admit that lost condition. Yet, as embarrassing as it may be, to succeed as a writer, people must acknowledge their inadequacies. Paradoxically, the reason writers must admit their inadequacies is the need to build their self-confidence. We cannot gain confidence until we face ourselves. Acknowledging our weaknesses makes us stronger.

Soon, I hope, you will no longer feel that awful, lonesome fear of not knowing what to write or that fear of being rejected. You will learn, I hope, to perceive questions and **acknowledgements of limitations** as what they ***can* and *should* be—indicators of growth**. Following are some suggestions that will help you build a storehouse of good publishable writing topics.

The Dissertation: A Source of Topics

There are many sources of ideas for writing topics. For those who have pursued graduate courses, **dissertations and theses are excellent sources for article**

topics. One individual, whose dissertation was titled "An Identification of Earth Science Principles Pertinent to Junior High School Programs and an Examination of Currently Adopted Textbooks in Terms of the Principles Contained Therein," capitalized on this study by producing two or three good articles. An analysis of this topic reveals that the study was divided into two major parts. Examine this title: It has two parts. Part One identified principles and Part Two examined textbooks to determine whether they contained these principles.

Within a year following the completion of the study, an article by the author of the dissertation appeared in the journal, *Science Education.* The title of that article was "Contributions of Science Principles to Teaching: The History and Status of the Science Principle." This article was actually a summary of the *review of the literature* that is usually the second chapter in a thesis or dissertation. **The *review of literature* section in dissertations and theses can easily be rewritten to form an article.** If you want a rich data source, this is it—the mother lode! Concurrently, there also appeared in the journal *School Science and Mathematics* an article by the same author, titled "Representation of Pertinent Earth Science Principles in Current Science Textbooks." This article was an abstract of Part Two of the dissertation. **Many dissertations have multiple parts; often each part can provide the substance for an article.**

You may have noticed that these articles appeared within a year following the author's dissertation. This means that they were written and submitted either while the dissertation was being written or almost immediately upon its completion. As you might guess, this was no accident. A leading expert on writing for publication, Dr. William Van Til, says that dissertations are like fish and company; they spoil quickly. Unlike cheese and wine which improve with age, **as topics for articles, disser-**

tations deteriorate rapidly. If you have recently written a dissertation or thesis or an important paper for a course you recently took, or if you are currently writing a paper, thesis, or dissertation, *now* is the time to draft your articles.

If, however, you achieved this milestone earlier in life, and you fear that your thesis or dissertation has gone the way of old fish, don't worry. There is still hope. **To make your old dissertation a timely topic, you can always duplicate part of your original study.** The author of our science education dissertation did just that, and within a couple of years an article appeared in another journal titled, "A Scientific Look at Science Textbooks in Indiana Junior High Schools." Still another article titled "Applications of Science Principles to Teaching" appeared concurrently in the journal titled *The Clearing House*.

By now you may be asking, *How long can this* milking *process go on?* The answer is, *Indefinitely.* **As long as you update your study or parts of it, you can generate excellent substance for more good articles.** Two years following the *Clearing House* article there appeared in the journal *School Science and Mathematics* an article titled "Contributions of Science Principles to Teaching: How Science Principles Can Be Used." Later, when the author had an opportunity to repeat approximately one-tenth of the study, there appeared in *School Science and Mathematics* still another article titled, "Principles of Conservation of Clean Air and Water Pertinent to the General Education Programs in Junior High School."

Several lessons are contained in this series of publications. Whether you have written a dissertation or thesis doesn't matter. You can still benefit from a few truths found in these examples. First, all **good theses and dissertations offer the substance for more than one good article**. Second, the sooner the articles are written,

the better. But, more important, it's never too late to use your dissertation or thesis to generate good articles. A close look at the titles of these articles shows that articles may be written on the general theme of the study, or the author may choose to select *parts* of the study, such as the *Review of the Literature* section. Or the author may choose to use part of the findings, such as the article that focuses on principles of conservation of clean air and water, ignoring the remaining ninety percent of the study. **For an older paper, thesis, or dissertation, a quick replication of part of the study can produce the necessary fresh data needed for a new article.**

One final note about using the dissertation as a source for article topics: unlike the dissertation, the articles need not be either boring or difficult to read. If you write for applied journals or for magazines, your articles don't even have to follow the rigid steps of the scientific method upon which most theses and dissertations are designed. In fact, for most journals the scientific method is inappropriate.

Your Job: A Source of Topics

Another excellent source for article topics is your job. Whether or not you are aware of your strengths, **all workers perform some parts of their jobs exceptionally well.** This means that you have information that is valuable to others who hold similar positions. But, month after month and year after year, aspiring writers who attend writing workshops openly acknowledge that they do not believe they have anything worthy of publishing. This conclusion is unwise and it is wrong. **You *do* have knowledge that is worthy of sharing, and until you acknowledge this truth, you will remain unduly handicapped.**

One beginning writer, a former teacher, had a job that required him to supervise student teachers in a public school setting. This new vantage point enabled him to see some of the barriers that prevent students from learning the content that teachers try to impart. This new job led to the publication of a series of articles titled "Student Teachers Unlock Learning Barriers," "What the New Teacher Should Know about Learning Barriers," and "The Teacher as a Learning Barrier." All of these articles appeared in different issues of the same journal, *School and Community*. By shifting from being a teacher to being an observer, this person discovered a series of barriers that prevents students from learning. What an excellent observation to share with other teachers! What an excellent article topic! This observer even made a list of teacher behaviors that interfered with learning. To non-teachers this may be inane information, but to the right audience it is valuable knowledge.

Other Occupations: A Source of Topics

Too often, we limit our writing to an unnecessarily narrow field; **professionals in many different fields could benefit from your expertise.** To avoid this myopic trap, we need only to think about the *several* audiences who could benefit from our articles. For example, a nurse might wish to write an article titled "Strengths and Weaknesses of Today's Nurses." Now, it's time to ask that ever popular yet ever important question, *Who cares?* Well, even if you and I don't care, there are others who do care *immensely* about the strengths and weaknesses of today's nurses. For example, nurse educators surely must actively seek out feedback on the graduates of their programs. They ask their former students what they learned that helps them in their work, and they ask the graduates' employers what additional skills their former stu-

dents need. Knowledge of the levels of performance of former students is essential for program evaluation, program improvement, and accreditation. Practicing nurses need to know what they do *well*, and they need to recognize those duties that they perform poorly. Directors of hospitals and clinics need to know the strengths and weaknesses of today's nurses. Personnel directors must be aware of common weaknesses in the profession if they are to avoid hiring nurses who possess these weaknesses.

With this in mind, our author can now ask the question, **What do I know that is valuable to each of these audiences:** Practicing nurses? Nurse administrators? Nurse educators? Each question may lead to a similar, yet different, article. Whatever your ideas for topics might be, you can multiply these topics by asking these questions: *Who would be interested in this topic? Who else?*

Reference Books: A Source of Topics

One of the richest sources of ideas for writing topics is the various reference books found in every library. For example, the *Readers Guide*, the *Education Index, Business Periodical Index, Psychological Abstracts, Index Medicus, Social Science Citation Index, Social Science Index, Humanities Index,* and the *MLA Bibliography.* These are but a few of the available reference books that can be used to identify topics. For example, suppose you decide to write an article on repairing bicycles. **By checking the most current volumes of the appropriate index, you can see what topics are being published.** Furthermore, you can readily identify those journals that are giving this topic attention. This is very important because most editors have topics that they prefer to include in, and topics which they prefer to exclude from, their journals.

Book publishers are even more topic-limited. Each book publishing company has topics with which it excels because each company has experienced reviewers and experienced marketers for those subjects. Although companies occasionally do break new ground, to do so is the exception. The acquisitions editor is far more likely to pursue tried and proven topics. Inexperienced writers are likely to purposefully avoid contacting publishers who already have a successful book on their chosen topic. This is a mistake. When the markets are large enough to support several books in a given area, publishers often actually pursue other book manuscripts in the fields in which they have proven that they can succeed.

Some topics will require the use of several key words. For example, while there may be no entries under *bicycle repair*, there may be entries under *repair*, or *small machines*, or still other categories. For some topics, several attempts may turn up no articles; it is then time to consider a computer search. For a nominal fee, most libraries offer this service. An added bonus provided by this service is that **in addition to telling you what is being published and which publishers are publishing on this topic, the computer search also produces a review of the literature which you can use to extend your own existing knowledge on the topic and which you can also use in your references and bibliography**. Additional uses of the library to locate good topics are discussed in Chapter Six.

Suppose that neither you nor the computer can locate any articles on this topic. Don't be discouraged. There's always a first time for everything. If you really want to write on this topic, do it anyway.

Forecasting the Future

By this time it should be obvious to you that with a little practice you will have no trouble coming up with innumerable ideas for article topics or book topics. But this alone is not enough; **you must be able to identify topics that will be popular *next year*.** You see, the topics that you read about today are at least one or two years old. If you write about them and are lucky enough to get your work accepted, when your work is published it will be at least two years old! This figure is derived from taking a year-old topic; spending three months preparing, polishing, and submitting the manuscript; and waiting another nine months for it to be published. Does this place you in the seemingly impossible position of having to forecast the future? In a way, it does. **But there is a strategy that you can use—a flawless strategy—to predict what topics will be popular in your field *one* or even *two* years from now.**

An effective way to identify topics of the future is to identify today's leaders in your chosen writing field(s). Take advantage of every opportunity you have to hear these leaders speak. The next time you visit a convention or hear a noted speaker, if at all possible, don't leave until you've spoken to this person. There is a sure-fire way to get most speakers' attention. Buy a copy of the speaker's latest book and at the end of the speech, take it forward for an autograph.

As you stand in line waiting your turn, listen to the speaker's conversation with other members of the audience. Invariably, someone will ask about a recent article or book. Although the speaker did, indeed, write the article or book, the individual will be puzzled to learn how vaguely the author recalls the specifics of the work. Why is the author so vague?

Though far from obvious, the answer is simple. Before you suspect the author of plagiarism, consider the

age of this work. Although the book or article carries a recent publication date, it has been at the publishing house for at least a year. Meanwhile, the author has moved forward to other topics. In fact, at this moment the admirer who has recently read the work has a better knowledge of the work than does its own creator.

Before taking time to talk to our speaker, we were looking for some ways to identify topics that will be popular one or two years from now. Actually, we haven't left our main path of pursuit because our side-track discussion introduced the best single way to identify next year's "hot" topics—**attend a conference or any assembly that affords you an opportunity to hear a speech by a recognized leader in your field of interest.**

The topic doesn't matter. You will know that it is on its way to becoming a popular item because the leaders in any field shape their field of study. While others are writing about the author's recently published, yet *year-old,* works, the author is writing about something very different. Since the leading authorities in any field have a way of getting their manuscripts accepted (this technique is known as having good writing skills) and since effective authors have a knack for getting mileage from their work, you can rest assured that this speaker's speech will be found alive and well dwelling in a book or an article (or both) in the next year or two. You can do far better than your competition if you **take notes and prepare your own article not on the author's book or article but on the much more current topic of the evening's speech.**

A perhaps less exciting but equally effective way to discover the topics of the future is to contact the editors of the journals that belong to your field of work. Ask these editors for a list of coming themes. Most nonfiction journals run a high percent of theme issues. Editors always know the forthcoming themes for their journals at least a

year or two in advance. Perhaps even better, contact your professional societies and **ask for the topics of their forthcoming yearbooks and for the chapter titles in these books.** Why is this method better? Because only the *best* of the *best* experts in the profession are invited to write a chapter in the yearbook. A trip to the reference desk of your local library can quickly identify the current members of the yearbook committee and the members of the journal publications committee.

Now you know that with a little effort, in the shape of purposeful planning, you can identify several excellent topics on which to focus your writing. **With a little experience you will soon be amazed to learn that locating topics is no problem. On the contrary, you will instinctively and unintentionally discover more topics—and *good* topics—than you will ever have time to pursue.**

This chapter suggests several methods that you can use to discover topics that you will want to write about, topics with which you will feel comfortable and about which you are knowledgeable. It contains several specific suggestions that you can use to identify good topics. Why not try using these suggestions?

Recapping the Major Points

This chapter points out that although having good timely topics is essential for all writers, beginning writers often search desperately for topics. You can always have a supply of topics if you remember these points:

1. Dissertations, theses, and term papers are excellent sources for journal articles.
2. When possible, articles based on dissertations, theses, and term papers should be written while the projects are underway.

3. Authors of dissertations of the past can duplicate part of the research and thereby produce substance for a timely article.
4. Your job (what you do well) is an excellent source for article topics.
5. You *do* have something to say that would make a good article topic.
6. You can increase your list of topics for publication by considering the various audiences who would find a particular topic pertinent. This produces one or more article topics for each audience.
7. Topics that are popular today will lose their popularity in the year or two that is required for their publication; therefore you should seek out topics that will be popular a year or two from now.

Chapter Three

GETTING STARTED

The Right Title

The skeptic asks, *What's in a title?* The answer is, only the most important key for the writer. **A good title lets you get the reader's attention.** Without this, the book stays on the shelf and the article is instantly and painlessly flipped out of the reader's life as the reader turns the pages in search of a more relevant article.

Today's authors must acknowledge that today's readers are good consumers. Unlike the 1940s' readers, they don't read all of the advertisements on the roadways, perhaps one reason for the demise of the clever Burma Shave signs. Instead, today's readers are very selective. They know they haven't time to read even a small percent of the books and articles with which they come into contact. **Today's readers have two reasons for reading. They read for *information* (nonfiction) or they read for *fun* (fiction) hoping to get lucky and find material that delivers both information and fun.**

The astute author can capitalize on this knowledge. As you search for the right title, **select one that hooks the reader's interest and/or promises to deliver information that the reader deems important.** Experienced writers know that to protect their integrity their writings must deliver whatever the title promises. Consider, for example, Tipper Gore's book, *Raising PG Kids in an X-Rated Society.* To catch the reader's attention, Tipper

Gore uses a little levity, playing on the motion-picture ratings. She then makes a definite promise to the reader. Whether a book title or an article title, the reader would feel disappointed should this work fail to deliver on its promise to provide help. Furthermore, this example also reflects the writer's need to *keep the audience in mind at all times.* With a title like *Raising PG Kids in an X-Rated Society,* Tipper Gore's intended readers are obviously parents and guardians. Each paragraph and each sentence must be designed to provide information that parents and guardians need. By implication this title promises to help these people meet the challenge of raising good kids in a less-than-wholesome society.

Once the promise of a title is made, it must be kept. It might help to remember that as a writer you are a seller. **You must exchange something in return for the reader's time, attention, and money.** In a society as busy as ours, a person's time and energy are highly limited. As a writer, you are competing with a thousand other vendors for people's time. In every sentence you must be sure that you don't shortchange the reader. Give something valuable to the reader and you will have gained a loyal customer, but break your promise and you will lose the reader's support. Consider the following titles. Do they hook *your* attention? Does each make a promise?

- *How to Turn $15 into a Money-Making Business*
- *Megamergers*
- *Breaking Up is Hard to Do*
- *The One-Minute Manager*
- *Finding the Freedom of Self-Control*
- *Existentially Speaking*
- *39 Forever*
- *Help for the Battered Woman*
- *Thoroughbred Handicapping, as an Investment*

- *The Facts on Fax*
- *How to Save Your Child from Drugs*
- *Eating on the Run*

A quick glance at this list tells the reader that these are nonfiction books. They promise to inform and help the reader.

Fiction books or fiction articles may be far less descriptive because the purpose of fiction is to entertain. Consider the following list of current popular fiction book titles:

- *Many Waters*
- *Leave a Light on for Me*
- *The Downside of Up*
- *Foxcatcher*
- *Speaker of the Dead*
- *Windmills of the Gods*
- *After the Rain*
- *Out on the Rim*
- *Something Shady*
- *The Treasure of Paruley's Island*

Although fiction book titles may or may not be descriptive, they usually stir the imagination. For example, the reader doesn't have to know that *Foxcatcher* is about espionage to find the title captivating. Good fiction writers know that their readers are imaginative, and good writers use this knowledge when choosing titles.

Selecting Titles for Nonfiction Journal Articles

Writers of nonfiction journal articles have a special opportunity to use titles to engage their readers. Knowing that their readers have even less time to dedicate to their reading, as compared to fiction readers who read for fun,

successful authors of nonfiction articles make even more definite promises to their readers. For example, consider the following article titles and their respective audiences.

Title	Audience
10 Ways to Avoid Litigation	Physicians
6 Ways to Resolve Discipline Problems	Junior high school principals
Knowing Your Clients' Needs	Realtors
Interviewing: Accentuating the Positive	Job applicants
Your Assets	Stockholders
How to Make Your Car Last 150,000 Miles	Car owners

All of these titles promise to help the reader. More important, the tasks to which this help is to be applied are perceived by these audiences as highly important. With litigation on the rise, in number of cases and in the number of dollars and number of awards to patients, what physician could ignore an article titled "Ten Ways to Avoid Litigation"? Or, for junior high school principals who must deal daily with children of the most awkward and rebellious age, what junior high principals could refuse an article that promises to make their own lives easier? These two titles have even more to attract the reader; they use numbers to assure the readers that the article offers substance (10 ways and 6 ways). When asked what he looked for most in an article, an editor of a research journal recently responded: "I suppose that what I want more than anything else is that each article makes some contribution." Readers of research journals and readers of applied journals want, even *demand*, substance from their articles.

The last title on the preceding list, "How to Make Your Car Last 150,000 Miles" is an actual title of an

article that appeared in *Consumer Digest.* Interestingly, the first page of this article carries a chart that lists the 10 least expensive cars to maintain to 50,000 miles, and a corresponding list of the 10 most expensive cars to maintain to 50,000 miles. With just a glance at this first page, this chart immediately tells the reader that this article offers substance. The author did his homework and researched his topic. Incidentally, he took this chart from another source, *The Car Book,* giving that source credit. Good writers review the literature to discover new and helpful information to enrich their articles. Good writers also use lists, charts, and graphs so that readers won't have to "sniff out" or look for the substance in their articles.

As these examples reflect, **by carefully selecting their titles, authors can get readers' attention, a skill which is a must for successful writers.** But equally important, these titles give direction to the author. Throughout your article or book chapter, each sentence must advance your theme. This has already been said, but it cannot be overstressed. A specific, descriptive title can put you on track and keep you there. The right title can help you select words and construct sentences to make this direct, straight-line advancement happen. **Use your title to guide the writing of each page and each paragraph.**

During the writing of a chapter or article, the writer sometimes discovers ways to improve the work by shifting the direction of the manuscript. Writers should feel free to alter the direction so long as their changes are intentional. A short interruption to explain or to offer an example is fine, if you return promptly to your theme, but do not allow the ultimate results of altering your message to be a manuscript that does something different than what the title promises. This need not be a problem since all you need to do to correct the mismatch is to revise the title. Even the best writers

make such adjustments. To refuse to do so would either result in a title that doesn't live up to its promise or a title that would force you to write in one limited direction, thus restricting your creativity.

Writing the First Sentence

The need for a captivating title has been established. The reader's attention must be captured. As we have seen, some titles accurately describe the work upon which the reader is embarking. **The author of nonfiction must immediately tell the readers exactly what this article or chapter will do.** This is the function of the leading sentence. For example, the first sentence may introduce a problem. The rest of the lead paragraph will explain how, and to what degree, the author will solve this problem, or, the article might begin with a question, and the rest of the lead paragraph will tell exactly what this article is going to do about answering the question. **The remainder of the manuscript must then step-by-step, sentence-by-sentence, paragraph-by-paragraph resolve the issue, solving the problem, or answering the question.**

Fiction writers may have no question to answer or problem to solve, but they must use the first sentence and paragraph to begin establishing the climate, introduce and develop the characters, and introduce conflict. Although fiction may not ask a question, good fiction often has a point of conflict, which the writer introduces very early to hook the reader.

A wide variety of types of lead sentences is available to writers. Factual statements are among the most common, although they are not necessarily the most captivating. You be the judge of that. Following are three types of lead sentences. Examine them and see which type you prefer.

- ***fiction/nonfiction:*** Early Sunday evening Tom Simms walked into the dimly lighted parking lot, unaware of the plot against his life.
- ***nonfiction:*** Americans are killing themselves and they don't even know it.
- ***nonfiction:*** What is your consumer I.Q.?

The three preceding sentences are all good lead sentences. They differ greatly. One is fictitious, one is factual, and one asks a question. Like **all good lead sentences, they hook the reader to want to know more.** What is it about these sentences that compels the reader to read the next sentence? Each one focuses on a topic that contemporary Americans find important. Crime continues to rise. Concern and commitment to better health are evidenced in the sale of exercise videos and books. Consumer awareness is a deep concern because of the increase in credit-card, mail-order, and stock-market fraud, not to mention the increase in customer-service frauds such as interstate auto-mechanics fraud and medical malpractice.

If yours is a nonfiction article, the lead sentence must address the topic revealed in the title, and it must extend this topic in a logical way. For example, an article titled "Our Foods Are Poisoning Us" may be followed by the sentence, "Americans are killing themselves and they don't even know it." The next sentence is very important, for it must reveal the purpose of this article. If the author plans to write about cholesterol, this sentence might read, "Each day Americans consume more cholesterol than...." If the writer wishes the article to focus on salt consumption, the next sentence might read, "Each day we eat ten times as much salt as our bodies need."

Having identified the focus of the article, it is imperative, while still in the first paragraph, **that the author articulate the purpose of this article.** Here the author must tell the reader what the article offers to enable the reader to cope with this situation. For example, the next

sentence may read, "Fortunately, through planning, we can control our consumption of...." This sentence implies that the rest of the article will tell the reader how to do this planning, and indeed, the rest of the article—each paragraph, each sentence, and each word—should be used to deliver this promise.

Examine again the first sample lead sentence: *Early Sunday evening, Tom Simms walked into the dimly lighted parking lot, unaware of the plot against his life.* Although this sentence could be used to start a nonfiction article, it seems more likely to be the beginning of a fiction article or short story. The beginning paragraph of short stories is just as important, and therefore must be constructed as carefully, as the first paragraph of a nonfiction piece. Assuming that Tom Simms is a leading character and that he will survive the parking-lot scene, the author must introduce him to the reader by describing his appearance and his personality. The reader can appreciate this story only by knowing Tom and perhaps by identifying with him. The reader will be compelled to read on and help Tom survive this and other such attempts (or other experiences that the author has planned for Tom), but the author must continue to build Tom's character, explaining why he behaves as he does.

As you have seen, authors often use more than a single lead sentence just to hook the reader. Consider the following:

"It's happening on college campuses everywhere. It's exciting and it isn't even illegal. But it should be."

These three short sentences are written to stir your curiosity and make you wonder: What's happening everywhere? What's exciting? What isn't illegal but should be? I used this lead for an article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* that warns writers about publisher rip-offs. The title of the article is "When Signing Book Contracts, Scholars Should Be Sure to Read the Fine Print."

Once past this hook, I immediately began listing these traps. I use bullets (designated by asterisk marks) and subheadings to highlight each pitfall, showing that the article has content and making this content easily visible to even the most casual reader. (See Figure 10-10.)

Paragraphing

Apart from grammatical errors and poor sentence construction, two mistakes account for a large percent of poorly written materials. Both of these mistakes concern paragraphing. Inexperienced writers seldom know when to end a paragraph. Some writers use the surveyor's approach. They stand back and look to see what percent of the page has been used; then they decide: *Ah, this looks about the right size for a paragraph.* So they hit the return key. Other writers just keep on writing and writing until their pens and ribbons run dry. You can do better.

The paragraph is an important tool, there for all writers who know how to use it. As readers read, they make associations between the sentences. The author can help shape these associations so that the reader thinks as the writer thinks. This is important if the reader is to draw the author's intended conclusions. By lumping the related sentences together, the author tells the reader which sentences to associate. By correctly assembling the sentences together the author can help the reader get the overall meaning of the paragraph. Here's where many authors fail. **As to the correct length for a paragraph, the simple rule is *one major idea per paragraph.***

A second good way to determine the best length of a paragraph is purposefully **to keep each paragraph short enough so that you (and the reader) can remember all of the ideas contained in the paragraph.** Usually a half, double-spaced typewritten page is about as much as a reader can retain. This is far shorter than

the paragraphs many novice writers spread across several pages of manuscript. **You can do better. Keep your paragraphs short.**

Once you complete your manuscript, read through it to see if each paragraph advances the ideas in previous paragraphs. If not, the paragraphs must be reordered. There is a good way to do this. Those who use the pencil or pen can write each paragraph on a large 5" x 8" card. Once completed, the cards can be sequenced and rearranged with ease. Those who use a microcomputer can with the use of a simple command key, easily shift the paragraphs until they find the best sequence.

Go Ahead and Write

The advice offered in this chapter may seem too prescriptive, but it isn't. It only provides a framework that helps writers get started. **The best way to begin writing is to forge forward without worrying about errors in spelling or punctuation and without trying to avoid superfluous words and sentences.** All of these errors can be corrected later. Don't make the mistake of perfectionists who ponder over word choice even during the first draft. Don't worry that you may be straying from the title. Writing is a creative process, even nonfiction writing. The first and foremost job of a real writer is to write. Recognize that **you do have something that is worth saying.** Identify your target audience and ask yourself: If I were in their shoes, what would I want to know? What would I find interesting? Helpful?

Some people find it helpful to make an outline. They say that making an outline forces them to rethink and sequence their ideas. It helps them identify the most important issues. But other people find that making an outline stifles their creativity. They say that when they write they don't want to be restricted to writing to an outline.

But what about *you?* Should you use an outline? The decision is simple. If you like to work with outlines, use one. If not, don't.

The main thing to remember about getting started is to do just that. Write! Whenever you think that you might have something to say, just write it down. The first draft doesn't have to be good. **Getting something on paper is half of the game. You can do it. Just write.**

Recapping the Major Points

Getting started is the most difficult and yet the most important thing that a writer has to do. This chapter helps you begin getting real words on paper. The chapter says that you will find the task of getting started easier if you remember these points:

1. During the first draft, ignore any need that you might feel to make your article grammatically correct.
2. Choose topics that are interesting to the reader.
3. Begin by writing a title that describes your forthcoming article.
4. Feel free to stray from your title; you can always retitle at a later time.
5. Make every sentence extend the message found in the preceding sentence.
6. For nonfiction articles, choose a title that makes a promise to the reader, then use the article to deliver that promise.
7. For fiction articles, write a title that hooks the reader's attention.
8. Use the first sentence to tell the readers exactly what this article will do for them.

9. When your manuscript is finished, check the title. If it fails to describe your article, change the title.
10. For fiction articles, begin developing the characters in the first paragraph.
11. For nonfiction articles, use the first paragraph to tell what the article is going to do to help the reader.
12. Keep your paragraphs reasonably short, limiting each to one major idea, and to no more supporting ideas than you can recall.
13. If you like outlines, use them; if not, don't.

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Chapter Four

ABOUT STYLE

I spent the whole morning putting in a comma; I spent the whole afternoon taking it out again.

—Oscar Wilde

In your quest for facts and tips needed to become a better writer, nothing is more important than style. First, be sure you have a good grasp of the meaning of style. Its nature and importance are clearly reflected in the behavior of polished performers. It might help if you keep someone familiar like, let's say Fred Astaire, in mind, since everyone recognizes that he epitomized excellent style. People with good style are poised and confident. They are eager to display their talents, as though to say, "Look at me! I've worked hard for this moment. And I have something to show for it. I'm good." The best part is that performers who have style never really say, "Look at me!" or "I'm good." They say it through their behavior without words—"Indeed, I am good!"

There are a million dancers, but there will never be another Fred Astaire. So it is with all people who have good style, including writers. Style is a combination of the steps that a dancer takes and how different dancers take the steps. Style is both the words a writer chooses to use and how the writer uses them. Here's where many beginning writers trip on their own thoughts. They lack the ability to see their own potential. This limits their ability to master an effective writing style. Good style requires a few basic understandings. These understandings shape how writers think, and, in turn, how they think shapes

how they write. You can begin checking on your own perceptions by asking yourself, "Do I have a clear reason for wanting to write? Exactly what do I hope to achieve through writing for publication? Do I believe that I am of average, or above average, intelligence and that I have the potential to become a polished writer? Am I willing to apply my talents toward these ends?" If you can answer yes to all of these questions, you are on your way.

Handicaps that Defeat Would-Be Writers

The art of rationalizing is older than the art of writing. You can bet that the cave man who came home without any food had some way to explain to the cave woman that it wasn't his fault. In explaining why they don't write for publication, some of our contemporaries are very resourceful. Ironically, some even say that they can't write because they aren't creative; yet, if their lists of reasons for not writing were examined, any idea that they lack creativity would be dispelled. Check the following list, and see if your creativity is showing.

18 Reasons People Give for Not Writing

1. It's who you know. Editors give preference to recognized authors, but they don't know my name.
2. I don't have time to write.
3. I don't know anything worth sharing.
4. I don't have any good topics to write about.
5. So much of what I read is inferior. I don't want to add to the list of mediocre writers.
6. Writers are born. You either have it or you don't. I don't.

7. Good writers don't need to revise or rewrite, but I do.
8. Good writing involves using sophisticated language that impresses editors. I don't have either a silver tongue or a rich vocabulary.
9. The extent to which a writer's works are read is always determined by the quality of the writer's work.
10. Rejections always reflect poor quality. I have been rejected.
11. To get published, you have to have an agent, yet agents only accept writers who are already published. It's a catch-22.
12. Good writing requires esoteric research, and I hate to do research.
13. Real experts don't have to conduct research.
14. Fiction writers don't need to conduct research.
15. Writers should strive for correct grammar as they write their first draft. I can't seem to get anything perfect.
16. Their respective jobs make writers and editors natural enemies.
17. Real authors don't get involved with marketing their work.
18. Pomposity and arrogance are necessary qualities for successful authors. I'm just plain old me.

Now it's time to dispel some common myths that impede the development of writers. Among these is the common belief that *It's who you know* that determines your success as a writer. Skepticism is in the eyes of the aspiring writer, and some beginners are bold enough to announce it openly. Some just bare their souls and say, "I don't know if I have what it takes to become a successful writer." At this point let me share a little good news.

Although it is deceptively simple, if you are to become a successful writer, you must set aside your modesty and believe in yourself. My promise to you is that **anyone of average, or above average, intelligence can become a successful writer.**

Occasionally skeptics will openly challenge this assertion. They say, "Sure, it's easy for people like you. You have published so much that the editors recognize your name. But what about me? Nobody knows me!" At this point, I have to admit that although my name isn't a household word to most editors, having editors recognize one's name probably causes them to consider a manuscript a little more carefully, and this may give a known writer a slight edge. But, I emphatically insist that **having an editor recognize your name is only a slight advantage,** which is far overrated, and while any advantage is good to have, **you don't need this edge to get published.** All you need to do is to turn out a good product, and you can do this by learning a few simple, yet important, "nuts and bolts" about writing and then carefully applying this knowledge to develop your own successful writing style.

Let's examine a little logic. Suppose you were the editor working for an important magazine, journal, or book publisher. It's fair to assume that most people would consider important any journal that happened to be their source of income. As an editor, your own success hinges on your ability to give your journal subscribers or book buyers what they want and need. If you succeed and your readership increases, this will make your board of directors happy, the president of your company happy, and your immediate superior happy. In turn, they respond with substantial raises, making you very happy. The converse of this scenario, however, isn't so pretty. In fact, it's so ugly and obvious that it must make us question the logic of anyone who believes that successful editors let friendships and familiar names seri-

ously influence their decision to accept or reject manuscripts. What kind of editor would run the risk of displeasing the readers and, therefore, the employer just to be partial to a friend? Only a very shortsighted and probably temporarily employed editor.

Now, for a final word on the subject of "It's who you know." Just last year, one of the most respected leaders in his field, both nationally and internationally, received a rejection slip for an article he submitted to a journal. Furthermore, the manuscript was rejected by a journal for which he himself had earlier served as senior editor for several years, the very journal which his editorship had elevated to a rank unsurpassed by similar journals. His manuscript was rejected because, although a leading expert in his field, this writer had failed to give his own manuscript the attention and hard work that it needed to meet the standards of that journal.

If not a recognizable name, then what does one need to become a successful writer? Some say luck. It's hard to deny that luck does play a part in the success of writers. On the other hand, people say that real winners make their own luck. That sounds better than waiting for luck to come to you. Unlike luck, over which we may have little or no control, each of us can *develop* an effective style. What is the best style? One that works for you.

Let's get off this merry-go-round and be specific: basic to success for both nonfiction and fiction writers is the ability to write clearly, succinctly, and positively. The most fundamental purpose of writing is to communicate. Whether writing fiction or nonfiction, **all successful writers are able to communicate ideas, thoughts, and feelings, and they do so clearly and accurately.**

Writing Clearly

In writing, **clarity is best achieved through the use of a simple, concise, straightforward approach.** Writing simply and clearly sounds easy, but for most people it is not. Why? There are two reasons. First, most beginning writers are steeped in the belief that the task before them is to impress the editor. Second, they think the best way to impress the editor is to use big words, complex sentences well-seasoned with jargon, and long paragraphs. Both of these ideas are dead wrong. The way to impress an editor is to communicate clearly. This is not easy.

Experienced writers and editors know that **anyone can take an easy topic and make it appear difficult, but only a skilled writer can take a complicated topic and make it appear simple.** Furthermore, the author's job is not to please the *editor.* It's to please the *readers*—the people who subscribe to the journal and the people who buy the books and magazines. Editors have a common expression that sounds strange to the novice but has precise meaning to other editors. Editors are often heard saying: "It's right for our journal" or "It's not right for our journal." Good editors develop a keen and accurate sense for what their readers want and expect in terms of both content and style.

By now, perhaps you are asking, *How do I know what content and what style is right for my publisher?* **There are two easy, sure-fire ways to learn what editors expect from their writers.**

First, get a recent copy of the journal and study it for both its style and content. Second, either phone or write and ask the editor for a list of needs, future themes of the journal, and guidelines for contributors.

Write concisely. Good writing is achieved by deleting unnecessary words and arranging them in active order. By this standard, parts of some translations of *The Bible* exemplify some of the best writing we know. For example, consider the verse, *"Jesus wept."* Although our educational

background may tell us that such simple writing should be avoided, this is powerful writing. Ironically, it is difficult to shed the pedagogy and jargon that we have learned to use so effectively to cloud our meanings. **For most of us, developing a good, simple writing style requires us to *unlearn* years of poor word selection and complicated sentence structure.** With determination and practice, you can master the art of straightforward, simple writing.

It is now time to learn how to write clearly and simply. Try to simplify each of the following statements by deleting unnecessary parts of each sentence. Be careful not to change the meaning of the sentence.

Editing Exercise

FIGURE 4-1

Delete the Unnecessary Words

1. The truth of the matter is that the company was not successful.
2. The judge, who was a distant cousin, set him free.
3. She is a woman who does not usually stumble forward without giving considerable thought to the possible consequences.
4. His cousin, who is somewhat older than he, himself is, will stand a good chance to inherit the entire estate.
5. The fact is, he's finished.
6. His job is a highly demanding one.
7. There is no doubt but that he responded in a highly hasty manner.
8. The reason why is that the Hawthorne control group was shocked out of its complacency by the supervisor's presence.
9. There is no doubt that the jury was right in finding him guilty.
10. Were you aware of the fact that excessive salt produces hypertension?

Your edited list should look something like the following:

FIGURE 4-2

Effect of Close Editing

1. The company was not successful.
2. The judge, a distant cousin, set him free.
3. She does not usually proceed without considering the consequences.
4. His older cousin will stand a good chance to inherit the entire estate.
5. He's finished.
6. His job is highly demanding.
7. There is no doubt that he responded hastily.
8. The reason is that the Hawthorne control group was shocked out of its complacency by the supervisor's presence.
9. No doubt the jury was right in finding him guilty.
10. Were you aware that excessive salt produces hypertension?

Although your results may vary from the revisions in Figure 4-2, you probably will agree that for most of these statements, Figure 4-2 is an improvement over Figure 4-1. If you look carefully, you will discover even more ways to shorten some of these sentences without changing their meanings. For example, sentence #7 still contains the superfluous words, *There is no doubt that.* These words are excess baggage. Delete them. Sentence #8 has the useless words, *The reason is that.* Sentence #9 could be shortened further by deleting *no doubt* and even further by changing *was right in finding* to *correctly found.* It is important to note that this editing takes place in steps, and that each step improves the quality of the product. This is precisely how good writers work. The popular belief that good writing is the product of

geniuses who get it right the first try is quite mistaken. **Polished manuscripts result from a series of editing sessions, each bringing gradual improvement to the work.**

Writing Positively

In speech classes we are taught to speak assertively. When writing, we should write forcefully. **Forceful writing results from writing concisely and positively.** Examine Figure 4-1. Sentence #1 can be made more positive and forceful by removing the word *not* and adding the prefix *un* to *successful.* The words *does not* in sentence #3 can be replaced by the word *seldom* and, of course, the word *proceed* must be changed to *proceeds.* Eliminating negative words

FIGURE 4-3: Writing Positively

Original Sentence	First Revision
The truth of the matter is that the company was not successful.	The company was not successful.
The judge, who was a distant cousin, set him free.	The judge, a distant cousin, set him free.
She is a woman who does not usually stumble forward without giving considerable thought to the consequences	She seldom proceeds without giving considerable thought to the possible consequences.
His cousin, who is somewhat older than he himself is, will stand a good chance to inherit the entire estate.	His older cousin will stand a good chance to inherit the entire estate.
The fact is he's finished.	He's finished.
His job is a highly demanding one.	His job is demanding.
There is no doubt but that he responded in a hasty manner.	He responded in a hasty manner.
There is no doubt that the jury was right in finding him guilty.	No doubt the jury was right in finding him guilty.

such as *not* is often a key to making writing more positive and forceful.

Study Figure 4-3. In it you will find the results of step-by-step editing of these statements. First, read a sentence in the left column and then follow that statement to the right to see how each editing step contributed to the improvement of the existing statement. Next, compare the statement in the left column with the final edited statement in the right column. Most of these examples show dramatic improvement, more than could be achieved in one step. Finally, notice that the objective of the first two steps was to shorten the statements. In the last step, the objective is to make the statement more active. From these examples, can you make a statement about how writers can make their writings more active? **To add power to their writing, good writers put the subject at the beginning of the sentence.**

FIGURE 4-3: Writing Positively (continued)

Second Revision	Third Revision
The company was unsuccessful	The company failed.
The judge set him free. (Wrong valuable meaning is lost.)	
She seldom proceeds without considering the consequences.	She thinks before she acts.
His older cousin will probably inherit the entire estate.	
His job is demanding.	
He responded hastily.	
The jury was right in finding him guilty.	

Because the sentences in these examples are exaggerated, they may appear unrealistic or ridiculously obvious. Many serious writings are full of superfluous words assembled awkwardly, and with passive verbs. Unlike the contrived sentences in the first three figures, the sentences in Figure 4-4 appeared in a very rough first draft of a book manuscript. They should offer more challenge.

FIGURE 4-4: Advanced Editing Exercise

1. It will help if teachers will identify routines *that need to be established.*
2. Teacher preparation programs typically spend a great deal of time acquainting prospective teachers with how to teach information.
3. Such fear may *well be a result of* a lack of understanding of some ways of preventing problems and of responding to them once they do occur.
4. However, repetition should not be overdone, if it is, boredom can set in.
5. In general, people who are acknowledged to have a great deal of expertise in a given area exercise considerable influence over others.
6. Efforts are being taken in schools of nearly every industrialized nation to improve the quality of high schools.

Sentence #1 in Figure 4-4 has two major problems. First, it has a very weak beginning; and second, it is too wordy. **To give the sentence more force, put the subject up front.** *Teachers should* or *teachers must* gives the sentence thrust. Shortening the sentence clarifies the meaning while making the sentence more powerful. The words *that need to be established* can be replaced with one

word, *necessary*. Obviously, a reversal in the sequence of the last two words is needed.

Sentence #2 suffers from too many words and from colloquialisms. By removing the colloquial expressions, you can reduce the number of words while simultaneously removing the distractions. For example, use *much* instead of *a great deal of*. Replace *how to teach* with *teaching methods* or *teaching strategies*. Simply delete the word *information*.

Now that you have seen how to improve these sentences by deleting unnecessary words and expressions, you can test your own skills on sentences 3, 4, and 5.

In sentence #3, replace *will be a result of* with *result from*, giving the sentence more force. Change the remainder of the sentence to *a lack of awareness of ways to prevent and resolve problems*. The expression *once they do occur* is superfluous since this is the only time one could *respond* to problems.

Sentence #4 begins with a conjunction. This isn't totally taboo today as it once was, yet, don't do it casually. For example, starting a sentence with the word *however* or *but* can make a stark contrast to the previous sentence. Change this sentence to read, *Excessive repetition causes boredom*. Did you think of another way to eliminate *set in?*

Sentence #5 is far too wordy. You might begin by replacing *people who are acknowledged to have a great deal of expertise* with the word *experts*, reducing the number of letters and spaces from 61 to 7. This is economical writing through good editing. Good writers are good editors. The ending of the sentence, *exercise considerable influence over others* can be reduced to *influence others*.

Now examine Figure 4-5. The same editing process has been applied to these more advanced statements. Because the original statements are more complex, the total improvements on each are more pronounced. Of the two sets of statements, the later, more complicated set resembles more the

FIGURE 4-5: Good Editing Is a Step-by-Step Process

Original Sentence	First Revision (to shorten)
It will help if teachers will identify routines that need to be established.	It will help if teachers will identify necessary routines.
Teacher preparation programs typically spend a great deal of time acquainting prospective teachers with how to teach information.	Teacher preparation programs typically spend considerable time acquainting prospective teachers with how to teach.
Such fear may well be a result of a lack of understanding of some ways of preventing problems and responding to them once they do occur.	Such fear may result from a lack of understanding of ways to prevent problems and respond to them.
However, repetition should not be overdone. If it is boredom can set in.	Repetition should not be overdone. If it is boredom can set in.
In general, people who are acknowledged to have a great deal of expertise in a given area exercise considerable influence over others.	In general, experts in a given area exercise considerable influence over others.
Efforts are being taken in nearly every industrialized nation to improve the quality of their schools.	Efforts are being made by most industrialized nations to improve their schools.

statements found in manuscripts. By this, we can see that the writing of an article or a book requires several editings. Indeed, **good writing is the result of good editing, and good editing occurs in gradual steps.**

FIGURE 4-5: Good Editing Is a Step-by-Step Process (continued)

Second Revision (to shorten more)	Third Revision (to make active)
	Teachers should identify necessary routines.
Teacher preparation programs typically spend considerable time on teaching about methodology.	Most teacher preparation programs emphasize methodology.
Such fear may result from a lack of understanding of ways to prevent and respond to problems.	Not knowing how to prevent and respond to problems can frighten teachers.
Excessive repetition can result in boredom.	Excessive repetition can cause boredom.
Experts in a given area exercise considerable influence over others.	Experts often influence their peers.
	Most industrialized nations are working to improve their schools.

Treat Genders Fairly

The 1970s will be remembered by many as the decade that brought concern for equal treatment of the sexes. Much of the advancement has come through our literature. As great efforts are made to portray the sexes equally and fairly, too often the results have been awkward writing. Initially, we moved from the single pronoun *he* and *him* to the double pronouns *he or she* and *him or her (even taking care to reverse the order half of the time).*

Then we learned to combine "she" and "he" by using a slash (s/he). All of these attempts to treat the genders fairly result in awkward reading. Some textbook authors have attempted to handle the problem by using masculine pronouns throughout and by prefacing the book with a disclaimer statement directing the reader to think masculine half of the time and feminine the other half of the time. None of these strategies is acceptable. You can do better, and you must do better if you are to become a successful writer.

Two easy strategies will skillfully handle the gender issue in almost all circumstances. You can simply choose to pluralize the subject or the object of an antecedent, or you can reconstruct the sentence so that the need for identifying the sex of the subject or object is eliminated. Figure 4-6 provides you an opportunity to develop some skills in treating the genders fairly without disrupting the flow of each sentence. First, see if you can resolve the problem by using the pluralizing strategy. Then see if you can resolve the problem by reconstructing the sentences. For this exercise, ignore the superfluity of these statements, and do not edit for any purposes other than controlling the gender problem.

FIGURE 4-6: Treating Genders Equally

1. There is no relationship between a learner's self-concept and the likelihood that he or she will develop acceptable patterns of self-control
2. The teacher can continue to monitor the entire class at the same time that he or she is working with the small group.
3. If someone is liked and respected as an individual, people are more willing to accept his or her advice than if he or she is not liked.

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

Now that you have had an opportunity to apply these two strategies, examine Figure 4-7 and compare the changes with those that you made. Should you find discrepancies, don't worry. Usually you will find several ways to improve statements.

Some improvements may be better than others, but all improvements are good!

FIGURE 4-7: Eliminating Sexism through Pluralizing and Restructuring

Original Statement	Revision Using Pluralizing	Revision Using Restructuring
There is no relationship between a learner's self-concept and the likelihood that he or she will develop acceptable patterns of self-control.	There is no relationship between learners' self-concepts and the likelihood that they will develop patterns of self-control.	Self-concept has no effect on self-control.
The teacher can continue to monitor the entire class at the same time that he or she is working with the small group.	Teachers can continue to monitor the entire class at the same time that they are working with the small group.	The teacher can continue monitoring the entire class while working with the small group.
If someone is liked and respected as an individual, people are more willing to accept his or her advice than if he or she is not liked.	If people are liked and respected as individuals, others are more likely to accept their advice than if they are not liked.	Friends have more influence than enemies.

Study Figure 4-7. Notice that for each statement, both rules are applied. Do you prefer the results of the revisions by pluralizing over those by reconstructing? Is your preference consistent for all three statements? This may give you some insight into how you want to handle this concern in your writing.

Recapping the Major Points

While learning how to write concisely, actively, and fairly, you are well into the process of developing your writing style. Take every opportunity to edit your writing and the writings of others. Only with practice will your skills continue to improve. As you continue your writing, remember these points:

1. Most editors base their decisions to accept or reject manuscripts on the quality of the manuscript and its revelance to the readers.
2. Nobody has time to write. Successful writers must reassign time for their writing, time which they may need for other activities.
3. Everyone with average intelligence has much information that would make an excellent article, if correctly written and aimed at the right market.
4. All good writers must write, edit, and rewrite each manuscript several times.
5. Writers should place clarity above all else.
6. Rejections don't always imply low quality.
7. Good writing is more plain than fancy, more simple than complex.
8. Editors and writers are partners who strive for a shared goal: to produce the best possible product for their readers.
9. Authors don't need pomposity and arrogance, but they do need self-confidence.
10. The best way to impress editors is to write clearly and accurately.

Chapter Five

ORGANIZING ARTICLES

Conducting workshops for writers is a gratifying experience because of the many different people who attend them. Over one hundred such workshops, some with hundreds of participants, have had no known disinterested participants or, indeed, no participant who was only mildly interested. Unlike the members of many audiences who arrive early to get a seat in the back of the room, these people arrive early to get a front seat! Nor does the speaker have to strive to get their attention. They arrive motivated and, for the duration of the workshop, they remain motivated.

Educators tell us that learning requires only two factors: motivation and ability. The students must want to learn and they must be capable of learning at the same level that the teacher is teaching. Aspiring writers are seldom short on either motivation or ability. When writing workshops fail, it's usually the presenter's fault. Too many participants blame themselves. Never doubt your ability to succeed as a writer. Just set your goals and go for them. You can astound yourself. This chapter helps you develop your organizing skills, and the ability to organize will help you produce a more successful manuscript.

The facts and tips on writing are easy to teach. Given highly capable and motivated audiences, most of the how-tos, the what-to-dos, and what-not-to-dos of writing are easily taught. This is not always true for helping people become better organizers. One aspiring writer was com-

pletely puzzled over writers' abilities to assemble hundreds of pages of ideas. This confused but brave beginner asked a very simple yet poignant question, "How do you know how to organize a manuscript?" The fact is, most people who are good organizers would be hard pressed to explain how they do it. They just do it. But they do it well. An answer such as this is of little help to individuals who have not yet mastered the skill of organizing writing. Fortunately for some of us who struggled with outlining assignments in our high-school English classes, organizing writing content for the purpose of publishing is easier than other types of organizing.

Have you ever watched while someone prepared a meal? If so, and if your acquaintance with the kitchen is limited to the refrigerator and microwave oven, you may have been amazed at the complexity of the task. (Some items are baking while others are simmering; and the cook is mixing others.) To a novice, just the timing alone is a miracle. But the experienced cook usually manages to have all the dishes and the bread and drink completed at the same time. That's organizing!

If you are an accomplished cook (which by my definition means that in two tries out of three you can prepare a simple meal without burning down the kitchen), then you are an organizer, even though you may find it difficult to explain how you do it. The same is true for writers. Successful writers are good organizers although they may not be able to help others learn how to organize. But there is good news. Organizing manuscripts for publication can be learned if you are willing to heed some advice that may sound elementary and trite. Maybe the following is just that, elementary and trite, but it is also a sure-fire way to improve your organizing skills.

Organizing Nonfiction Articles

Organization can be thought of as a separate tool that you can use to hold your readers' attention, make your writing clearer, and give your writing more force. There are five skills that you can easily master and use to achieve better organization. These skills are achieving substance, showing application, using subheadings, paragraphing, and paragraph sequencing.

Organizing Skill No. 1: Achieving Substance

Nonfiction readers go to the libraries and bookstores in search of substance just as grocery shoppers go to the supermarket. Just like the grocery shoppers, readers look over the products. They don't want just anything to fill their baskets. They want substances that have specific uses. The producers of every product in the stores know that their economic survival depends on their ability to help the customers find what they need. Through written and artistic advertising, they make the advantages of their products known to everyone who comes down the aisle. Book and magazine buyers shop equally selectively. They browse through the bookshelves and the card files until they find something promising. Then they track it down and, opening to the table of contents, they resume their shopping, checking the article and chapter titles. Everyone knows that people today are selective, but few realize just how selective people really are. Newspaper publishers know. They know that only one reader in ten completes reading a front-page article that is continued on another page. This is why papers such as USA Today don't extend many articles beyond one page.

Knowing that the readers are looking for specific content and knowing that the average reader will give only a few seconds to survey the table of contents of a journal or book, give you an advantage that your less-aware com-

petitors don't have. You have already learned how to select captivating titles. Now consider the reader's next move. After finding a title that promises content, the reader will either begin reading or will thumb through the article to see how long it is and what it looks like. Either way, the author wins, so far.

This is where the experienced writer takes care to see that the reader doesn't take a quick glance and reject the article. This can be done by openly displaying the major parts of the manuscript. By clearly identifying the distinct parts and by structuring the article appropriately to display these parts, you can achieve the same effect that the washing powder producers hope to achieve by labeling their products as "Effective in hot or cold water" and "Gets out ugly stains." **Arrange your manuscript so that its major messages are visible to even the casual reader.** The following article, titled "Accountability and Performance-Based Programs in Education: Some Pros and Cons," drew responses from some thirty countries. See Figure 5-1.

Remember that editors are responsible to their readers. They must select for their readers articles that offer substance and articles that are organized in such a way that their substance is visible. As you examine the article in Figure 5-1, see if you can identify some features of this article that openly proclaim to the reader that this article offers a lot of information, arranged so the reader can easily identify these several important contributions.

FIGURE 5-1

Accountability and Performance-Based Programs in Education: Some Pros and Cons

"PERFORMANCE-BASED TEACHING MAY PROVE TO BE ONE OF THE BIG ADVANCEMENTS OF EDUCATION IN THIS CENTURY."

By Kenneth T. Henson
Associate Professor of Education,
Indiana State University, Terre Haute

For many decades, education in the U.S. has been compared unfavorably to industry. Education has been judged by many to be inferior in its operating procedures because its product, unlike industry's, cannot be measured on a piecemeal basis, and because quality control is not possible. The obvious answer toward improvement, then, would be to find a way to measure the quality and quantity of the educational work. Thus was born the concept of "accountability" in education. Accountability means "the ability to deliver as promised."

I continue with about two manuscript pages of introduction; then I introduce pros and cons of performance-based teaching. Notice that these are presented in pairs to show contrast.

The following is an account of the development of this movement and some of the pros and cons of performance-based teaching, along with a discussion of possible ways of changing some of the disadvantages into advantages.

PROS	CONS
Performance-Based Teaching:	*Performance-Based Teaching:*
1. Clarifies the objectives of teaching, assuring purposeful teaching directed toward the attainment of definite goals.	1. Is primarily concerned with cognitive learning; therefore, it does not account for the development of the whole child—emotionally and socially.

Imagine how substantive this appears. Each page of this article has two of these columns; each page has a total of ten or more pros and cons.

Concern that current attention to cognitive development will ignore other important areas of child or adolescent development is unfounded. Actually, the forces of this emphasis, if properly directed, can be utilized to improve the guidance of social, emotional, and attitudinal growth. The use of performance-based activities which are built around activities which involve students will provide opportunity for the teacher to observe how students work with others (social and emotional growth) and to talk with students about their school and non-school interests. In the future, insight into cognitive goal-identification and measurement of cognitive growth should provide information applicable to non-cognitive areas.

PROS	CONS
2. Enables the student to know what he is working toward, making learning meaningful and enjoyable, enabling each student to work together and independently toward visible, pre-identified goals.	2. Does not account for difference in potential among students. It demands the same achievement from the least capable as from the most capable. Will result in the gifted student achieving below his potential.

I continued this pattern of writing a short paragraph followed by a matching pro and con until ten such pairs were listed. Then I used the following summary statements to close the article.

Whether PBT will be misused and overused is uncertain. That it will produce some important findings about teaching and learning is definite. Whether these findings will be recog-

nized and used depends on open-minded teachers and administrators.

The potential gains from performance-based teaching will be limited by the skills possessed by its users. When misused, the performance-based approach can produce undesirable effects which can lower the quality of experiences provided by any school.

Positive or negative results will depend largely on the local school system. Rapid implementation of this innovation probably will produce little success. However, if the system first provides the in-service training essential for familiarizing each teacher with the new program, and provides time for pilot programs, performance-based teaching may prove to be one of the big advancements of education in this century.

Quickly glance at Figure 5-1 as though you were scanning articles to choose one to read. Remember that every page in this article clearly displays a few pros and cons. Right away you conclude that this article has content. The visible content sets this article apart from so many articles which ramble on and on, never drawing any definite conclusions. You can immediately see that this article is an exception. Incidentally, in this article of mine, I purposefully identified specific *pros* and *cons* and then paired them, arranging them so that each pro would have a counterpart con. To make these clusters of content even more obvious to the reader, I used a heading for each *pro* and a heading for each *con*. To take even further precaution to assure that the reader would get the idea that this article has something concrete to say, I gave each pro and each con a number. This manuscript was accepted by the first editor who saw it, for publication in a journal that reports only a dozen articles a year in this field. The success of this article led to an invitation to speak at the Hannover School of Medicine in West Germany.

The following article in Figure 5-2 uses similar structuring to communicate clearly that it, too, has something definite to say.

FIGURE 5-2

Middle Schools: Paradoxes and Promises

Kenneth T. Henson

The Clearing House, Vol. 59, Issue 8, pp. 345-347, April 1986. Reprinted with permission from The Helen Dwight Reid Educational Foundation. Published by Heldref Publications, 4000 Albermarle St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20016. Copyright 1986.

Anyone who has read Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* will recall the opening lines:

> It was the best of time, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going the other way.

To the uneducated person, these lines may appear foolish, but the alert mind finds them stimulating. With these few lines, Dickens was able to tell his readers that they were about to set out on a journey full of suspense and action. Such is often the case with paradoxes; they challenge us to investigate, and yet they are difficult to understand.

The American middle school is one of the most misunderstood institutions in our society. It is also one of the most interesting and challenging concepts, with unlimited possibilities. Like Dickens' novel, the American middle school is full of paradoxes that not only make it a worthy challenge to study, but that also fill it with promises for becoming a better educational institution than any of its predecessors. The following presents some of these paradoxes and discusses some of the promises for hope and success of the American middle school.

Paradox Number 1

Teaching in the middle school is both frustrating and rewarding.

Interestingly, few students plan to teach the middle grades; yet, attrition alone assures that the number of middle school and junior high school teachers is greater than the number of high school teachers. Therefore, most middle school teachers begin their experiences somewhat reluctantly and without confidence. They find their students at a very awkward age. This brings an inordinate number of problems to the middle school teacher.

But after teaching this level of students for a year, many teachers find themselves hooked on this age group for life. The reason for this paradox is found in the rewarding feeling teachers experience when they help youths who have either no direction or too many directions in their lives. The middle school teacher is often identified as the one individual in a youth's life who is most influential and whom the students would most like to emulate.

I continued with two additional paradoxes and then introduced three promises as follows:

Promises of the Middle School

Although the middle school offers contradictions and challenges, these should not be interpreted as indicators of a dismal future for the middle school. In recent years, research on classroom teaching offers much to counterbalance the limitations imposed by these paradoxes. Following is a generalized representation of the research that can make the future of the middle school increasingly bright and successful.

Promise Number 1

Many popular myths that limited progress in academic achievement have been disproved.

According to Hunter,

> Current findings are in direct contrast to the former fatalistic stance that regarded I.Q. and socioeconomic status as unalterable determinants of academic achievement. Gone also should be the notions that different ages, ethnic deviations, or content to be learned require a completely different set of professional skills, or that effective teachers must be born and can't be made. (1983, p. 169)

Although no one denies that genetic inheritance sets limits on learning, recent research shows that many students' learning has been curtailed by their acceptance of limits imposed by intelligence-test scores, limits that have often been far below their real levels of ability. In fact, studies have shown that contrary to popular belief, a full 90 to 95 percent of all secondary-level students are capable of mastering all of the content and objectives found in modern schools (Bloom, Hastings, & Madaus, 1981, p. 51).

I continued with Promises Numbers 2 and 3, and then wrote the following conclusions:

Conclusions

The middle school has not failed in the many ways that the junior high school failed, and it will not likely achieve the poor image of its predecessor because, unlike the junior high school, the middle school has a clear set of purposes. Among these purposes is that of nurturing the emotional, social, and cognitive growth of students. Despite the many paradoxes that make these goals difficult to reach, recent progress in educational research gives reason to hope that all teachers at all levels will become more effective in their power to enhance cognitive growth in their classrooms.

Since its origin, the middle school has been dedicated to nurturing the growth of its students, and middle school teachers have always viewed change positively. As research on classroom teaching continues to enhance cognitive attainment

at all levels (K-12), these characteristics of the middle school and of middle school teachers should accelerate this progress among students in the middle schools.

I always count the number of references in articles in my intended journal and I purposely include a few more than average. Can you guess why? You'll find the answer in a later chapter.

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Like the former article, this article titled "Middle Schools: Paradoxes and Promises" identifies several major "chunks" of material. Some of these chunks are labeled *paradoxes,* and some of the chunks are called *promises.* Unlike the previous article, in which a *pro* and a *con* were paired, this article lists the paradoxes sequentially and deals with all of them before addressing the promises. Like the other article, numerals are used to give emphasis to the fact that this article has a definite number of separate and distinct pieces of substance.

Now for just one more example, see Figure 5-3.

FIGURE 5-3

State Mandated Accountability Programs: Are They Educationally Sound?

Curriculum theory and practical curriculum development are interdependent, despite the all-too-common belief to the contrary, say these writers. They describe Mississippi's statewide accountability program to illustrate the need for a sound theoretical base for instruction.

By Kenneth T. Henson and Thomas H. Saterfiel

State departments of education across the country—often in conjunction with universities—are initiating accountability programs aimed at increasing student gains on standardized tests. Elsewhere, college professors are writing curriculum textbooks which provide theories and axioms for use in developing curricula.

Unfortunately, it is commonly assumed that theory and practice are unrelated events. A second and even more unfortunate assumption is that theory and practice are somehow opposite forces. The result is that teachers accuse professors of being theoretical and unaware of the real world, while professors may fail to demonstrate clear applications of the theory they espouse.

An analysis of an existing statewide accountability program in terms of curriculum axioms presented in one of the popular textbooks, may help to dispel these faulty assumptions. The program selected for analysis is Mississippi's Accountability and Instructional Management (AIM) program. The curriculum axioms are taken from *Developing the Curriculum,* by Peter F. Oliva.

Overview of the Program

In 1979, Mississippi mandated a statewide curriculum development program which was by law to be implemented throughout all of its 150 public school districts. In effect, every school district in the state was given five years (or until November 1, 1984) to have in full operation a districtwide curriculum that covered grades 1 through 12. Kindergarten was to be added by 1985. Each program was to include all of the components shown in the figure.

Objectives	Content	Teacher Activities	Student Activities	Materials	Evaluation

All objectives were to be written in terms of expected student behavior. The content was to emphasize broad generalizations, not just facts, and several test items were to be included for each of the hundreds of objectives.

Now, as the five-year development period draws to a close, many Mississippi teachers realize that more curriculum development is possible than they had once thought. These possibilities and the positive outcomes of the AIM program are not at all unrelated to the curriculum axioms that undergird this

program. The following is an analysis of this program based on curriculum axioms found in the current literature.

These articles are some of the easiest written of any that I've had published. This one has the unique advantage of being based on axioms taken from a current textbook, giving this article credibility and currency.

Program Analysis

Axiom 1. Curriculum change results from changes in people.

A common question among Mississippi teachers has been "Why doesn't the state department of education develop the curriculum?" As Hilda Taba pointed out some 30 years ago, only when teachers are involved in making changes will they be willing to [implement] and capable of implementing those changes.

Of all the advantages to be derived from this (or any other) accountability program, perhaps the greatest advantage of all is the change that takes place within the individual teachers who, upon completion of this program, will be infinitely better prepared to write behavioral objectives, select activities and content to attain these objectives, and develop test items to evaluate student progress in terms of these objectives. Equally important is the change in attitude that occurs when teachers participate for such a long period of time in such a systematic curriculum development process. In the future, these teachers will automatically plan in terms of objectives, sequence, scope, and balance.

Axiom 2. The curriculum planner starts from where the curriculum is, just as the teacher starts from where the students are.

At no point in its development has Mississippi's AIM program suggested that teachers throw away their existing lesson

plans. On the contrary, consultants for the AIM program frequently advise teachers to start their curriculum development by stating their existing practices. This posture was in many instances the single force that enabled many teachers to accept the new mandate.

I continued this pattern of listing an axiom taken from this curriculum book and following it with a paragraph or two about the axiom until a total of nine axioms were listed and discussed. Then, I followed with this summary:

Summary

Too often the content of college textbooks and that which happens in school classrooms are considered to be separate and unrelated. Yet, direct involvement with the AIM program in public schools and awareness of the axioms found in contemporary curriculum development textbooks, bring similarities that cannot be dismissed.

It would seem reasonable to suspect that many other state accountability programs are consistent with the theory taught in college classrooms. Certainly, investigations comparing these two variables will lead to a better awareness of the validity of the theory and of the need for a sound theoretical base.

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

Now that you have seen this article in Figure 5-3, does it not give a clear message that the article is substantive? In case you are questioning your ability to generate articles of substance, you may find relief and self-confidence in knowing that the Pros and Cons in the first article and the Paradoxes in the second article came from the writer's direct experience. Nothing difficult.

Nothing magic. You can do the same just by thinking about your own field. The "promises" came from articles in print (you could do the same by examining your own journals), and the axioms are direct, verbatim quotes (with the publisher's permission) from a book. Why were some taken from direct experience, and some from the literature? Because an author's experience is limited. Used by itself, personal experience has limited value to others. By taking some of these concepts from printed works, authors can increase their amount of substance while also establishing their own credibility. Once you know the major contributions of your article, **you can show that your manuscript is substantive by using side-headings, lists, and numbers.**

Organizing Skill No. 2: Showing Application

Nonfiction readers are looking for ways to do things better and easier. They read because they hope they will find ideas that they can take to their office, home, or elsewhere to improve the job they do as they work or play. Knowing this gives you power. **You can make your writing more useful to your readers by helping them envision possible ways to apply this information.**

The old adage that says that "good teachers tell the students what they're *going* to tell them, then they tell them, and then they tell them what they told them" offers a real trap for nonfiction writers. The adage does an injustice to teaching because good teachers must plan variety into their lessons. Like teachers, writers must find several *interesting* ways to deliver their information. One excellent way to reintroduce significant content in articles is to use a simple list. This list is effective only under two conditions: (1) It must address content that the reader finds relevant (a shopper who goes to the market to buy milk is unlikely to be attracted by even the best designed

advertisement if that advertisement is about motor oil). (2) The list must be short and simple (a potato chip ad with a list of words like "crisp, crunchy, and cholesterol-free" is more effective than three long paragraphs about the superiority of this brand of potato chip). Figure 5-4 shows an article which contains a list.

FIGURE 5-4

Corporal Punishment: Ten Popular Myths

Kenneth T. Henson
The University of Alabama

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As discipline problems continue to grow, more teachers are feeling the need to resort to corporal punishment in order to cope with their daily roles. Because discipline is a serious problem, teachers tend to place it at the top of their list of survival skills. For 50 years, it has been the number-one concern for beginning teachers (Tanner, 1978). While there are many uncertainties about how a particular class or situation should be handled, one thing *is* certain: someone is in control. If not the teachers, it's the students who reign. And without proper discipline, even the best prepared and best delivered lesson goes down the drain.

Corporal punishment often seems to be the best remedy for a classroom with problems. But teachers should realize that there are many myths about the powers of corporal punishment. An awareness of these myths could help deter the overuse and misuse of corporal punishment. Following are 10 of the most widely accepted myths.

Myth No. 1: Corporal punishment is time efficient.

As contrasted with the teacher who analyzes each lesson to see what went wrong and who begins to add more meaningful student activities or more relevant content, the teacher who reaches for the paddle appears to save considerable time

and effort. The application of corporal punishment doesn't require the teacher to take time to think about the cause of the misbehavior or of other possible alternatives. Ironically, those teachers who depend on corporal punishment to discipline their classes usually spend an inordinate amount of time controlling their classes. The reasons for this contradiction are revealed in the following myths.

Notice how easy this format makes writing. I just list a misconception about corporal punishment and then write one or two short paragraphs about each misconception (myth).

Myth No. 2: The effect of corporal punishment increases with its use.

The effectiveness of corporal punishment actually diminishes with the increase of its application. The teacher who searches for the causes behind misbehavior and eventually finds its true causes may reduce the problem and extinguish the unwanted behavior. But the teacher who uses corporal punishment, often substitutes concern for *why* a student misbehaves with *how* to get him to behave, often increasing the harshness of the punishment in an attempt to *force* students to behave. Many students do not respond well to such force.

Myth No. 3: Corporal punishment attacks the problem head-on.

Experienced teachers know that successful teaching requires the courage to face and control discipline problems. To simply ignore problems in the hope that they will go away is not effective, nor is it adequate. Teachers must have the courage and skill to face discipline problems head-on.

But corporal punishment does not attack the problem; corporal punishment attacks the student. The physical attack of corporal punishment on a student is obvious; not so obvious is the psychological attack of corporal punishment. The damage

caused to the self-concept through humiliation and embarrassment can be much greater than any physical pain involved. Because corporal punishment attacks the person, not the problem, its effect is often to increase the frequency and seriousness of the misbehavior.

Myth No. 4: All students dislike corporal punishment.

Teachers often choose corporal punishment because they believe that it is the one approach that is effective with all students. "Unlike grades or praise, which work only with some students," they say, "corporal punishment has the ability to reach all students, since all students dislike it." But some students seek out corporal punishment because it gives them an opportunity to make the teacher feel guilty.

I continued with this pattern, listing a myth and following it with a paragraph. This makes the writing incredibly easy and it immediately tells the reader who may be scanning through the journal choosing an article to read that this is the one; it obviously has substance and it presents it clearly. I repeated this simple pattern until ten myths were listed and discussed. The tenth myth was as follows:

Myth No. 10: Teachers have a right to do whatever they must to maintain discipline in the classroom.

Although only three states have statutes prohibiting the use of corporal punishment, many local school systems in most states specifically prohibit the use of corporal punishment. It is the teacher's responsibility to know the state and local laws. In those systems that do permit corporal punishment, teachers must understand that when using corporal punishment they must follow due process, which means that they learn to take the following steps:

1. Use corporal punishment only as a last resort.

2. Use corporal punishment in the presence of a colleague.
3. Use corporal punishment only after having forewarned the student that repetition of the offense could lead to corporal punishment, and when requested by the student's parent or guardian.
4. Provide a written account of the events leading up to the use of corporal punishment, including all attempts to avoid the punishment.

Teachers who incorrectly use corporal punishment risk facing litigation problems with a population that has more rights than ever before and which is more aware than ever of those rights. The old adage, "Ignorance is no excuse in the sight of the law," holds a painful truth for today's teachers who may have had little or no instruction in the legal ramifications of corporal punishment.

Today's teachers are responsible for recognizing these popular myths about corporal punishment. Every opportunity to learn more about corporal punishment should be seized. Surely those teachers who are permitted to use physical force with students are responsible for learning all they can about its effects.

Most of the references should be of recent vintage. I purposely strive for a majority no older than one year. This tells the readers that I have visited the library and that I try to stay abreast of the latest developments.

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Just how relevant is the content in this article? The answer depends on the audience. Since the intended audience for this article is middle school teachers who must deal daily with these very awkward and often rebellious youths, the substance called *discipline* is very important.

Organizing Skill No. 3: Using Subheadings

Few people realize the real significance of subheadings in magazine and journal articles. Just how important are they? So much so that **some journals *require* their authors to insert subheadings at specified intervals.** I want to share with you an article that I wrote for *USA Today* and show you how I used subheadings to launch a counterattack on several nationally known reports. See Figure 5-5.

FIGURE 5-5

Reforming America's Public Schools

"RECENT YEARS HAVE SEEN A RASH OF NATIONAL TASK FORCE REPORTS ON THE STATUS OF AMERICAN SCHOOLS. TOO MANY OF THEM HAVE POLITICAL MOTIVES AND ARE DESIGNED TO ALARM, RATHER THAN INFORM."

by Kenneth T. Henson

When public anxiety is aroused by war, inflation, depression, civil unrest, or whatever, Americans look for someone to blame. That's good, because the one unfailing sign of a vital, healthy climate is the public's vigorous desire to participate in criticisms and give suggestions for reforms. Frequently, the easy target is the tax-supported neighborhood school. Amer-

ica's public schools are not the perfect instruments that some would like us to believe they are. There is much room for improvement, and there always will be.

However, many attacks on schools, teachers, and administrators are unfair, and many are just plain faulty. For example, in the past, our schools have been criticized heavily for lack of discipline. Over the last 15 years, the Gallup Poll of Public Attitudes Toward the Public Schools has found the number-one concern to be lack of discipline. In the 1984 poll, over three-fourths of the population rated discipline in the schools as a serious problem. Yet, before we blame teachers for this problem, we should hold up a mirror to society. Violence is running rampant in our communities. During our entire involvement in Vietnam, more Americans were killed on the streets of American cities by handguns than were killed on the battlefields in Southeast Asia.

In America, violence is a way of life. Recently, on national television, the police commissioner of a major city warned residents to purchase guns, carry them, and learn how to use them, if they were interested in protecting themselves and their families.

How do you like this style? Notice that the bold remarks are substantiated with specifics, and the sources of the specifics are listed.

Even our youth are not safe from violence. Each year, over 300,000 American children are abused in their own homes by family members. According to Marvin Wolfgang, director of the Center for Studies in Criminology and Criminal Law at the University of Pennsylvania, "Americans tend to legitimize violence by glorifying war, buying guns, and supporting the use of physical punishment." The worsening condition of school discipline is reflected in the changes in our perceptions of discipline problems over the past four decades. The effect has been that

today's students have to commit a far more serious act than did their earlier counterparts to even have it considered a discipline problem. An examination of the top problems in public schools today compared to those of 1940 reflects this change. In 1940, they were talking, chewing gum, making noise, running in the halls, getting out of turn in line, wearing improper clothing, and not putting paper in wastebaskets. By 1982, the worries were radically different, focusing on rape, robbery, assault, arson, murder, suicide, vandalism, extortion, drug and alcohol abuse, pregnancy, abortion, and venereal disease.

Do the schoolteachers cause the discipline problems?—of course not. In fact, they are often the victims of them. Annually, over 50,000 teachers are physically attacked by their students and by other members of our society who just walk into their classes from off the streets. How many critics of our schools realize that, in this country, more teachers are attacked each year than are policemen? In 1978, the National Institute of Education reported that 5,200 junior high school teachers were attacked each month over a 10-month period—totaling 52,000 attacks on teachers, compared to 49,079 attacks on policemen during the same period.

Other critics load their guns with test scores, blaming the schools and teachers for doing a poorer job than their predecessors. There are at least two major errors here. First, since the 1950s, our schools have constantly increased their holding power so that two-thirds of those who were dropping out at that time are now remaining in school long enough to take the standardized exams. In other words, while it is true that the national test scores have steadily declined for several years, we are now testing a larger percentage who earlier would have been dropouts. In reality, our decline in test scores has been much less than our increase in holding power.

This introduces a second major error in blaming the schools for poorer academics. American students are competing with students of other nations, but the percentage of American students who

pursue formal education long enough to take those tests is far greater than that of schools of other countries throughout the world. Recently, when the top nine percent of American students was compared with the top nine percent of students of other countries, our students held their own. It is remarkable that our schools and teachers can prepare these top performers so well while simultaneously educating a far larger portion of its youths than do schools of any other country.

In the U.S., high school graduation has become a national norm. Eighty-six percent of adults aged 25-29 hold a diploma, an increase of 50% since 1950. Our schools are often criticized for failure to provide adequate defense for the nation. They are accused of being weak in the hard sciences such as math and languages. Yet, the number of Nobel prizes earned by Americans shows a different picture. In fact, since the Nobel prizes were first awarded in 1901, Americans have won one-third of all that have been awarded. This is approximately seven times as many as have been won by the Soviets and twice as many as any other nation.

A tone of panic

Recent years have seen a rash of national task force reports on the status of American schools. Too many of them have political motives, and they are designed to alarm rather than to inform. For example, the most popular of all was "A Nation at Risk" (1983). If the title of this report lacks sensationalism, the report itself doesn't. Words are carefully selected and sentences carefully constructed to exaggerate the popular myths that many Americans hold about their schools. For example, consider this sentence: "If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war."

A similar report, "Action for Excellence" (1983), appeared at about the same time. This report also carries a tone of panic. It speaks of "a need for survival" and uses such terms as emergency and urgency. Through the use of exaggeration and inflammatory language, these and similar reports of the 1980's mislead the public. Most of these reports are the products of groups who may have

very little knowledge about the total role that American schools have played and must continue to play if America is to continue as a free, democratic nation. The purposes of our schools cannot become so narrow that they exist only to sustain a healthy economy or only to provide national defense. Although these are worthy goals, the American school must continue its much broader purposes—to prepare citizens for living in a democracy, and to challenge each student to become everything that student is capable of becoming, whether it be a computer scientist or an artist, an astronaut or a teacher. A brief look at each of these reports shows both reason for hope and reason for concern.

A NATION AT RISK was written by the U.S. Department of Education's National Commission on Excellence. It recommends requiring all students to take four years of English; three years of mathematics, science, and social studies; and one-half year of computer science. These are good recommendations, but how about the fine arts, vocational subjects, and the performing arts? The report does recommend that these should be offered, but such a recommendation does little to assure that they will become part of the curriculum. Even if they do find their way into the curriculum, those students who need them most may be the least likely to elect to take them....

I have two reasons for including a large part of this article in this book. First, I hope you have noticed that the tone of this writing is far different from that used in professional journals. I take strong exception to the many educational reformers who don't know much about the task of educating our youth—critics who ignore facts, truths, and research; and to critics who use inflammatory rhetoric to drive the American public to panic.

Second, you may have noticed that I responded by using the dramatic type of language that is common in USA Today. But I also use plenty of facts to support my points. Next, notice my heading, "A tone of panic." This is eye-catching. I used the remainder of this article to dissect the major reform reports. And each dissection came under a subheading which was the title of the report that I am attacking: A Nation at Risk, A Place Called School, High School, The Paideia Proposal, and Action for Excellence.

Effects of reports

The flurry of reports on education is affecting the schools. State legislatures and departments of education are responding to these reports. Some of the resulting reforms are good, but many bring severe detriments to American education. For example, most of the reports call for a reduction in the number of electives that students will have in their curricula. Indeed, some recommended the abolishing of all electives. Almost none of the reports mention the fine arts or the need for a broad-based liberal-arts curriculum....

Finally, although I have an arsenal of literature that I frequently use to support my profession, for this article I didn't include a single reference. Why? Because USA Today does not use references.

The pages in Figure 5-5 appeared in an article in the journal *USA Today*. A glance at this article gives the reader an immediate awareness that topics do make a difference. When readers first see this article, their eyes probably go directly to a subheading and then to other subheadings. The first subheading grabs the reader's attention with an announcement, *A tone of panic*, followed by a familiar yet alarming message, *A nation at risk*. As with earlier examples, these headings also say to the reader, "Stop! This article is loaded with substance." You, the author, must then deliver this substance. In the example given, this article does a good job of delivering the promise made by its title. Under each heading is a condensed major national report or book.

Another magazine which gives subheadings additional emphasis is shown in Figure 5-6. This magazine is *National Business Woman*.

FIGURE 5-6

How to Have the Time You Need

THE OLD ADAGE "IF YOU REALLY HAVE A JOB THAT NEEDS DOING, ASK A BUSY PERSON," MAY BE VALID BECAUSE THROUGH TRIAL AND ERROR, MANY SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE HAVE SET ATTAINABLE GOALS AND ASSIGN PRIORITIES.

Kenneth T. Henson

"I don't have time for my work at the office and all the chores at home," my neighbor explained. "When I turn my attention from the office to jobs around the house, my performance at work suffers. I *have* to bring home a check. Therefore, the clothes hampers overflow and dishes stack up, the furniture and floors need waxing and week after week I postpone the garage sale I have been planning for months! I feel even worse about having almost no time for the children. I rush to prepare their meals and by the time the kitchen is cleaned,

it's their bedtime. No wonder I often feel that I hardly know my own family."

Another neighbor, though, is a calm, civil person until she hears the expression, "*just* a housewife." She contends that as a mother of three and a wife of one, she works an almost uninterrupted 18-hour day. Yet she insists, "Each day of housework puts me further behind in my chores than I was yesterday."

Most of us have trouble finding enough hours to do the many tasks that face us daily—the result being that some important things are continuously delayed and never get done.

Identify Long-Term Goals which are Important to You and Your Family

(one paragraph)

Identify Short-Term Goals which are Important to You, Your Family, and Others

(one paragraph)

List Your Goals

(one paragraph)

Order Your Goals

(three short paragraphs)

State Your Goals Positively

(two short paragraphs)

Specify and Limit Your Aspirations

(one paragraph)

Include Some Pleasure-Producing Goals

(one paragraph)

Revise Goal List Regularly

(four paragraphs)

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Notice that the intervals between subheadings are much shorter. What does all of this mean to authors? Just this. As you examine the journals to which you plan to target your manuscripts, first see if they use subheadings. If so, the answer is simple: use subheadings. Next see how frequently they use subheadings. Count the words between subheadings and space your subheadings at approximately the same intervals. You can use the subheadings to accomplish more than one purpose at once: (1) hold the reader's attention (2) send a message that this article is loaded with valuable content (3) increase your acceptance potential (4) guide your direction as you write your article.

The last advantage needs to be developed further. **By using subheadings appropriately, you can have the article almost write itself.** This will be more believable after you examine Figures 5-7 and 5-8 which show an article followed by an outline of subheadings of this article and two other similar articles.

FIGURE 5-7

Discovery Learning

by Kenneth T. Henson

Copyright © by Kenneth T. Henson. *Contemporary Education*, Vol. 51, No. 2, pp. 101-103.

Perhaps as you read the title, your initial thought was—exactly what is discovery learning? And maybe this article will be somewhat different from most and will clarify what is meant by discovery learning. Or your initial thought might have been—oh no, not another article on discovery learning. But even so, chances are you have some understanding of, and faith in, the discovery process, or else you would not have selected this topic to read. The following paragraphs will define discovery learning and by examining numerous studies, will list advantages, disadvantages, and suggestions from the teacher who wishes to try discovery learning for the first time or improve teaching skills with planning and implementing discovery learning.

Definition

Most of the literature on discovery learning doesn't define it, leaving the reader feeling somewhat embarrassed for not knowing exactly what it is and probably ashamed to ask anyone else....

> *I go on to discuss approaches to defining "discovery learning" in two paragraphs.*

Advantages

The advantages of discovery learning are numerous....

> *I discuss advantages for two paragraphs.*

Disadvantages

It may be difficult to believe that a learning system with so many advantages also has several inherent disadvantages; but it does....

> *I discuss disadvantages for two paragraphs.*

Methodology

As with any instructional approach, the degree of success of discovery learning is determined by the ability of the teacher to plan effectively and execute, i.e., manage and supervise the lesson. A review of the literature suggests the following approaches for use with discovery learning.

> *Sickling's ten guidelines, and Bittinger's two suggestions follow.*

Summary

Like all teaching-learning strategies, the discovery method has advantages and disadvantages....

I end with a one-paragraph summary.

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The article in Figure 5-7 looks almost identical to two additional articles. Even the content in these articles is structured almost identically. Figure 5-8 shows the subheadings in the three articles.

FIGURE 5-8

The Same Structure Shapes Three Similar Articles

Discovery Learning	Inquiry Learning	What's The Use of Lecturing?
Definition	Definition	Uses of the Lecture &
Advantages	Advantages	Methods of Lecturing
Disadvantages	Disadvantages	Improving the Lecture
Methodology	Methodology	Altering the Lecture
Summary	Summary	Conclusion

Your reaction may be, "But is this legitimate? Should an author structure articles so similarly?" The answer is, absolutely yes. Incidentally, fiction writers use the same plot again and again. For example, only three basic patterns underlie all *whodunit* mysteries. The content for the three articles in Figure 5-8 is totally different. For example, one advantage of discovery learning is that it is highly motivating. Failure to motivate is a major *disadvantage* or limitation of the lecture. An advantage of the lecture is that it is highly efficient (much content can be covered in a short time). A distinguishing feature of discovery learning is that it is very *in*efficient, (using discovery learning is a very slow way to get through a list of topics).

By using a tried and proven structure, the author increases the likelihood of acceptance of the manuscript, saving a lot of important time—time that could be spent researching the topic, or drafting and editing the manuscript.

I use this same format for a chapter in my book Methods and Strategies for Teaching in Secondary and Middle Schools, Longman, 1988. In that chapter titled "Teaching Strategies," I include a synopsis of articles that I have written on the lecture, tutoring, inquiry learning, questioning, discovery learning, and simulation games. For each section in this chapter, I use precisely the same format that I have used for each article. This book is now in its third edition. Because of its organization and documentation (132 references), this chapter (of the book's 15 chapters) consistently receives the highest rating by reviewers.

Organizing Skill No. 4: Paragraphing

English texts frequently discuss several types of paragraphs, such as introductory, emphatic, transitional, and concluding. To be sure, writers need to know how to write each of these types, but the major problem that writers experience with paragraphs is their inability to identify one. That's right. Many struggling writers don't know a paragraph when they see one! Furthermore, they often fail to recognize one when they themselves have written it. A review of a few journal articles will show that some published writers fall into this category. As simple as it sounds, without the spacing and indenting, could you tell where another writer's paragraphs should begin and end? Would you see paragraphs exactly the same as another writer sees them? Probably not.

Your elementary or junior high science class probably first introduced you to concepts. There, you learned that concepts are categories made up by people. What a friend

considers a long pencil with a soft lead, you may consider a short pencil with hard lead. So it is with paragraphs. **Each paragraph should focus around one major idea.** When the author progresses to a new idea, a new paragraph should be used. Sounds simple, but is it? For example, examine this paragraph that you are now reading. Does it focus on one idea? Two? More? Should it be divided to form more than one paragraph? If so, where? Figure 5-9 gives the first three pages of an article manuscript. Examine it and decide where you would begin each new paragraph.

FIGURE 5-9

Paragraphing Should be Based on Specific Guidelines Rather than on Intuition

As discipline problems continue to grow, more teachers are feeling the need to resort to corporal punishment in order to cope with their daily roles. Because discipline is a serious problem, teachers tend to place it at the top of their list of survival skills. For 50 years, it has been the number-one concern for beginning teachers (Tanner, 1978). While there are many uncertainties about how a particular class or situation should be handled, one thing is certain: Someone is in control. If not the teachers, it's the students who reign. And without proper discipline, even the best prepared and best delivered lesson goes down the drain. Corporal punishment often seems to be the best remedy for a classroom with problems, but teachers should realize that there are many myths about the power of corporal punishment. An awareness of these myths could help deter the overuse and misuse of corporal punishment. Following are 10 of the most widely accepted myths. Corporal punishment is time efficient. As contrasted with the teacher who analyzes each lesson to see what went wrong, and who begins to add more meaningful student activities or more relevant content, the teacher who reaches for the paddle appears to save considerable time and effort. The application

of corporal punishment doesn't require the teacher to take time to think about the cause of the misbehavior or of other possible alternatives. Ironically, those teachers who depend on corporal punishment to discipline their classes usually spend an inordinate amount of time controlling their classes. The reasons for this contradiction are revealed in the following myths. The effect of corporal punishment increases with its use. The effectiveness of corporal punishment actually diminishes with the increase if its application. The teacher who searches for the cause behind misbehavior, and eventually finds its true cause, may reduce the problem and extinguish the unwanted behavior. But the teacher who uses corporal punishment often substitutes concern for why a student misbehaves with how to get him to behave, often increasing the harshness of the punishment in an attempt to force students to behave. Many students do not respond well to such force. Corporal punishment attacks the problem head on. Experienced teachers know that successful teaching requires the courage to face and control discipline problems. To simply ignore problems in the hope that they will go away is not effective, nor is it adequate. Teachers must have the courage and skill to face discipline problems head on. But corporal punishment does not attack the problem; corporal punishment attacks the student. The damage caused to the self-concept through humiliation and embarrassment can be much greater than any physical pain involved. Because corporal punishment attacks the person, not the problem, its effect is often to increase the frequency and seriousness of the misbehavior. All students dislike corporal punishment. Teachers often choose corporal punishment because they believe that it is the one approach that is effective with all students. "Unlike grades or praise, which work only with some students," they say, "corporal punishment has the ability to reach all students, since all students dislike it." But some students seek out corporal punishment because it gives them an opportunity to make the teacher feel guilty.

Were you able to find new paragraph beginnings so that each of your paragraphs develops one clear idea? Now go back and examine Figure 5-4 to see how your paragraphing compares with mine.

Learning to paragraph takes practice. Don't be too harsh on either of us if our paragraphs are not identical. Paragraphing, like writing itself, is not an exact science. Paragraphing remains an art; some variation is to be tolerated; in fact, variation is expected since the author's personal preferences affect the length of each paragraph. A good guideline for judging the length of a paragraph is to keep it short enough that you can immediately repeat it. A half-page of double-spaced typed manuscript is about right, and never more than a page. Your repetition need not be verbatim, but having just read your paragraph, you should be able to recall all the facts.

If you cannot, your paragraph is too long.

Organizing Skill No. 5: Paragraph Sequencing

Writers are often confused over the search for the "correct" sequence for their paragraphs. As you can see in these examples, sometimes the sequence of paragraphs is of little significance. It usually doesn't matter which set of pros and cons follows another set, or which axiom follows another axiom, but, it is always good to **check to see if a logical paragraph sequence exists.** For example, in an article titled "Ten Ways to Increase Your Safety at the Ice Rink," an author might put *follow the direction of the crowd* before giving advice about exiting the rink. Perhaps you noticed in the article about the myths of corporal punishment that Myth Number One is introduced first because the other myths explain the basis for Myth Number One.

The advent of the word processor has eased the paragraph sequencing task for many writers. If you do not use

a word processor (although perhaps you already know you should), an alternative is to write each paragraph on a 5" x 8" card. When all paragraphs are written, you can simply organize and reorganize the cards until they are in the sequence that makes the most sense to you. Remember that each paragraph, from the first sentence to the last sentence in the article, should advance the discussion.

Recapping the Major Points

Learning the *how-tos*, the *what-tos*, and the *what-not-tos* of writing is easy, but learning how to organize an article is not so simple. In this chapter you learned the following:

1. Correct sequencing of ideas is necessary to hold the reader's attention.
2. Nonfiction journal readers demand substance in the articles they read, and you can use organization to show even the most casual reader that your articles are substantive.
3. You can use subheadings, clusters of items, and numerals to inform readers that your articles have substance.
4. Clustering material into major "chunks" simplifies the writing of articles, making the job easier.
5. Nonfiction readers select those articles that can help them improve their performance of responsibilities at work and at home.
6. If your journals use subheadings, you should, too. Count the number of words between the subheadings in your target journal, and space subheadings in your article at similar intervals.
7. Most novice writers make their paragraphs too long. Limit your paragraphs to one major idea and to no more ideas than you can recall.

8. Lists can be used to attract a reader, but only if the reader finds the items on the list important.
9. As you write, do not worry about the sequence of your paragraphs. By using note cards or by using a computer you can easily adjust the sequence after you have completed drafting your article.

Chapter Six

USING JOURNALS, LIBRARIES AND SURVEYS

Using Journals

For years higher education institutions have encouraged their members to write and submit their works to journals for publishing. Major research universities have held the strongest expectations for their academic employees, often requiring them to publish in research journals. Recently, however, many regional, private, and parochial colleges and universities also have begun requiring their ranks to write and submit their articles to professional journals.

Whether writing for a research-type journal or other professional journals, writers can begin improving their skills in this craft by using the journals themselves. Few novice writers and perhaps only a few experienced writers make maximum use of the journals to perfect their writing and publishing skills. Editors will tell you that you should begin writing each article by reading a few recent issues of the journal to which you plan to submit your manuscript. This chapter contains other ways that you can use the journals to increase the level of acceptance of your manuscripts.

Physical Characteristics

Interestingly, readers can read every issue of a journal for years and still know very little about the physical

make-up of the journal. Think about a journal that you often read. If asked, could you tell anyone this journal's average article length, its average reading level, the average number of references for each article, how many issues are themed, or whether it is refereed and if so to what degree? Each of these characteristics is very important to the aspiring writer; each one can enhance your ability to get your manuscripts accepted by this journal. The answer to each of these questions is in the journals themselves. It has been said already, but it's worth repeating, that editors know "what's right for their journals." The secret to understanding what's right for a journal is knowing the audience, and you can discover the audience by studying the journal's physical and editorial characteristics.

Article Length

One of the most obvious physical properties of any journal is the length of its articles. You want to know the minimum, maximum, and average lengths. To determine these lengths requires examining only one or two recent issues. Simply count the pages of each and note the longest article and the shortest article. Use the lengths of all articles in the issue(s) to compute the average, then translate the number of journal pages into manuscript pages. The conversion is simple: Each typed manuscript page has about 300 words. To change from journal pages to manuscript pages, count the number of words on an average journal page, multiply by the number of journal pages, and divide by 300.

Try to keep your article length between the length of the shortest article and the average-size article for the journal. The reason for aiming at the shortest length is that an editor often needs a short manuscript to finish out an issue. Because your manuscript is short, it may be chosen over others that are equally well written but too long.

FIGURE 6-1

Graph for Estimating Readability—Extended

Reading Level

A somewhat less obvious quality of manuscripts that makes them "right" for their audience is the manuscript's reading level. Some journals have high reading levels; others have low reading levels. You can easily determine the reading level of your journal by following these steps:

1. Randomly select a page from each of three articles and count out 100 words for each, starting with the beginning of a sentence in each article. Count each proper noun, acronym, and numeral group as a word.
2. For each hundred words, count the number of sentences, estimating the length of the last sentence in tenths.
3. Count the number of syllables in the passage.
4. Compute the average sentence length and average number of syllables. Plot these on the graph in Figure 6-1. Place a dot where the two lines intersect. Most reading charts use grade levels to calibrate reading levels. This answer is the approximate grade level of your journal.

The reading level of your article should approximate the reading level of your journal. If your manuscript's reading level varies substantially from the reading level of your targeted journal, examine the sentence lengths and the lengths of the words in the two, and then adjust your manuscript accordingly.

Guidelines for Authors

Most professional journals have a page or two of instructions or guidelines for authors to follow when writing and preparing a manuscript for that journal. Check your target journal. Most guidelines resemble the one in Figure 6-2. They may be labeled by another name such as "Suggestions for Contributors," "Information for Authors," or "Manuscript Guidelines." Study these guidelines carefully.

FIGURE 6-2

Sample Guidelines to Authors

ACTION IN TEACHER EDUCATION

The Journal of the Association of Teacher Educators

The journal is seeking articles to fulfill its purpose of providing a forum for the exchange of information and ideas concerning the improvement of teaching and teacher education. Articles submitted should reflect this mission. Their focus should concern concepts, practices, or research that have practical dimensions, implications, or applicability for practitioners involved with teaching.

Manuscripts are subject to review by members of the Professional Journal Committee and editorial consultants. Points of view and opinions are those of the individual authors and are not necessarily those of the Association. Permission to reproduce must be requested from the co-editors.

MANUSCRIPT GUIDELINES

❑ **Content:** Journal issues are either thematic or "open theme." Articles which address the themes should be submitted by the deadline for the thematic topic. Articles addressing concepts, practices, and practical dimensions or implications for practitioners are sought.

❑ **Length:** The manuscript, including all references, bibliographies, charts, figures, and tables, generally should not exceed 15 pages. Pages must be numbered.

❑ **Typing:** Double space all text with 1 1/2 inch margins all around.

❑ **Style:** For writing and editorial style, follow directions in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (1983). References MUST follow the APA style. Authors are urged to avoid sexist language.

❑ **Cover Page:** Include the following information on a separate sheet at the beginning of the manuscript.

1. Title of the manuscript.
2. Thematic or open topic.
3. Date of submission.
4. Author's name, complete mailing address, business and home phone numbers, institutional affiliation and address.
5. Brief biographical sketch, background, areas of specialization, major publications.
6. If a computer is used, indicate IBM or Apple compatible. State compatibility and list word processing program used.

❑ **Abstract:** In 30 words or less, describe the essence of the manuscript. Place the abstract on a separate sheet at the beginning of the manuscript. Do not include your name or any other identifying information on the sheet.

❑ **Addendum:** Place tables, charts, figures, or illustrations at the end of the manuscript on separate pages.

Authors' guidelines are the quickest route to understanding those qualities that can make your manuscript fit the particular journal. Notice the style, and be sure to put your manuscript in this style. If the guidelines call for a 50-word summary, prepare a 50-word summary. If the guidelines forbid tables, charts, or figures, don't include these in your manuscript. Most guidelines ask for a self-addressed, stamped envelope (S.A.S.E.). Whether or not your journal asks for this item, **it is always appropriate to include an S.A.S.E. with your manuscript**. Authors often ask the following question about authors' guidelines: "Suppose the journal I am interested in has no *guidelines for authors* printed in it. Should I request a copy?" The answer is a definite *yes*, but, a precaution is necessary. Editors are proud of their journals. They like to think that most members of the profession are familiar

with their journal. Asking the editor for a copy of guidelines may reveal your lack of familiarity with the journal which surely is not in your best interest when you are about to submit a manuscript. There is, however, a way out of this dilemma. Instead of writing or calling the editor and asking for a copy of the authors' guidelines, you can phone or write your request to the managing editor, the editorial assistant, or the secretary.

Call for Manuscripts

Occasionally, professional journals issue a *Call for Manuscripts.* These may also carry similar titles such as "Call for Papers" or "Request for Manuscripts." See Figure 6-3. These items usually appear when a journal is new, when it has new management, or when its goals or operating procedures have been altered. Whatever the specific occasion, whenever you read a *Call for Manuscripts* you know that the journal needs more manuscripts.

FIGURE 6-3

Sample "Call for Manuscripts"

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The editors of *Educational Leadership* invite manuscripts on the following

THEMES FOR 1991–92

Educating Today's Children and Youth (September 1991)
Values, goals, and interests of today's youth. Arrangements by schools to work with parents and community agencies.
Deadline: March 1, 1991

Transforming Leadership (February 1992)
Shared leadership, teacher leadership, leader training.
Deadline: August 1, 1991

Curriculum Integration (October 1991)
Interdisciplinary programs, forms of literacy (scientific, musical, and so on) multiple intelligences.
Deadline: April 1, 1991

Teacher Education and Professional Development (November 1991)
Preservice and inservice teacher education. Career development and professionalization.
Deadline: May 1, 1991

Whose Culture? (December 1991-January 1992)
Multicultural education, culture-centered programs, humanities.
Deadline: June 1, 1991

Schooling and Work (March 1992)
Vocational education, involvement of business and industry, tracking, proposals for national testing and certification.
Deadline: September 1, 1991

Beyond Effective Teaching (April 1992)
Current research on teaching and learning and its relation to practice.
Deadline: October 1, 1991

Assessment (May 1992)
Reports on current efforts to develop measures more suitable than multiple-choice tests by which to evaluate students and schools.
Deadline: November 1, 1991

What we look for...

The editors look for *brief* (1500-2000 words) manuscripts that are helpful to practicing K-12 educators. We are *not* looking for term papers or reviews of literature, and we rarely publish conventional research reports. We prefer articles in which the writer speaks directly to the reader in an informal, conversational style and the treatment of the topic is interesting, insightful, and based on the writer's experience. We usually don't find query letters helpful; we prefer to read the manuscript. Check each issue for an expanded notice about a specific theme.

How to prepare your manuscript...

To prepare your manuscript, double-space *all* copy; number *all* pages; and show your name, address, phone number, and fax number on the cover sheet only. On page one, just above the title, indicate the number of words in the manuscript, including references, figures, and the like. Cite refer-

ences in the text like this (Jones 1978), and list them in bibliographic form at the end of the article; or use citations in the form of numbered endnotes. See a recent issue of *Educational Leadership* for examples of citations. For other matters of style, refer to *The Chicago Manual of Style* and *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*.

How to submit your manuscript...

Send two copies, and include a self-addressed stamped 9 x 12 envelope if you want them returned. It is not necessary to send unsolicited manuscripts by overnight mail—our deadlines are target dates, not factors in selection. You can expect to receive a postcard telling you that the manuscript has arrived; a response from an editor should arrive within eight weeks. If you discover a small error after mailing your manuscript, please do not send a correction; small errors can be corrected in the editing process.

What happens next...

If your manuscript is accepted, even provisionally, we will ask you to send a letter-quality original *or* an IBM-compatible diskette. Then your manuscript enters the pool of manuscripts on hand for a particular theme issue (or for use in "Other Topics"). When the editors assemble a particular issue, they review all manuscripts, both solicited and unsolicited, in order to make selections for the table of contents. All unsolicited manuscript selections are tentative until we go to press.

How to survive the editing process...

If your manuscript becomes a contender for the final table of contents, it is assigned to a staff editor, who shepherds it through all the editing and layout processes. Once your manuscript is edited, you will receive an edited version for your review, correction, and approval. At this time you will have a chance to correct errors, answer our queries, and update any outdated information. The style requirements of *Educational Leadership* dictate heavy editing, and we appreciate collaboration with the authors at any time in the process.

About artwork and photographs...

The editors like to have photographs and artwork related to the manuscripts, but these do not influence editorial selection. We appreciate having the opportunity to see your artwork—photos (black and white are best for us), book covers, student papers, and the like. Send them when you are notified that your manuscript has been accepted or when we have begun the editing process.

Send manuscripts to:
Dr. Anne Meek, Managing Editor
Educational Leadership
ASCD
1250 N. Pitt St.
Alexandria, VA 22314-1403

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The common supply/demand ratio that makes writing a buyer's market puts you at a major disadvantage as you try to get editors to accept your manuscript. The *Call for Manuscripts* tells you that if you act quickly, you can submit your manuscript at a time when the editors need it. **Don't miss the opportunity to act when the odds are in your favor.**

Coming Themes

A recent survey found that editors receive about three or four times as many manuscripts for general issues as for themed issues. This makes themes important to you. Figure 6-4 shows an announcement of common themes. Examine these and see if you would be comfortable writing for a theme issue.

FIGURE 6-4

Announcement of Coming Themes

1991 THEMES AND REQUEST FOR MANUSCRIPTS

May-June (1991):
The Ethical Responsibilities of Teaching

The problems facing American society and schooling have been characterized as a "crisis in caring." The economic and social stress on families and schools have left many children without the caring relationships needed to build academic competence and social responsibilities. These conditions have imposed additional responsibilities on teachers. The editors are interested in theoretical and empirical studies that examine the ethical responsibilities of teaching and their implications for teacher education. The following questions might be investigated: What alternative ways of conceptualizing the ethical responsibilities of teaching should be included in teacher preparation programs? What organizational structures and educational experiences in teacher preparation programs will enable prospective teachers to develop their critical awareness of the moral responsibilities of teaching? Should students' history of legal and ethical behavior be considered in assessing their qualifications for acceptance into a teacher education program? How should teacher educators foster prospective teachers' capacity to care? What knowledge, skills, and values should prospective teachers develop to enable them to assume the ethical responsibilities of teaching?
Manuscript submission deadline: November 1, 1990

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Announcements like this one typically are placed on one full page and cover all themed issues for the coming year. Notice that each theme is accompanied by a corresponding deadline submission date. To benefit from the opportunity to reduce the rejection odds, you must prepare your manuscript well in advance of the deadline and

mail it in time to have it arrive at the editor's office prior to the deadline date.

Reviewers' Guidelines and Rating Scales

Refereed journals have experts in the respective fields of their content specialty who have agreed to read several manuscripts a year and judge the appropriateness of these manuscripts for a particular journal. To provide objectivity, most refereed journals furnish their reviewers with a set of guidelines and a rating instrument.

Rating scales serve the editors by helping them attain information that is consistent among reviewers. Rating scales also serve the reviewers; they do this by helping them simplify their jobs. Put simply, the rating scale tells the reviewer what qualities to look for in manuscripts. **But more important to you, rating scales can tell you, the writer, what qualities to put into manuscripts.** For example, examine Figure 6-5.

This rating scale has seven criteria against which manuscripts submitted to this journal are measured. Notice that the first item on this scale is "significance to teacher education." How important is it that authors choose topics that are considered pertinent by the audience who subscribes to the journal? Actually, for this particular journal and many others, this is the most important quality of its articles. According to the journal's former editor, failure to write on topics pertinent to the journal's audience is the most frequent reason that manuscripts sent to this journal are rejected. Study the other six criteria, too. These are typical of the criteria included in many journal rating scales.

FIGURE 6-5

Rating Scales Raise the Quality of Manuscript Evaluations and Simplify the Evaluators' Work

JOURNAL OF TEACHER EDUCATION
Reviewer Response Form: Manuscripts

Assessment of Manuscript Quality

CRITERIA	ASSESSMENT				
	Weak	Marginal	Accept-able	Strong	Excellent
1. Significance to teacher education	1	2	3	4	5
2. Suitability for JTE audience	1	2	3	4	5
3. Stimulating quality of material	1	2	3	4	5
4. Originality	1	2	3	4	5
5. Accuracy of content	1	2	3	4	5
6. Quality of writing	1	2	3	4	5
7. Overall manuscript evaluation	1	2	3	4	5

CRITIQUE (Please type):

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Writers often ask, "Which, if any, of these criteria are indispensable?" Although the answer may vary slightly from journal to journal, it is safe to say that most editors consider items 2 and 6 indispensable. Perhaps the most difficult criteria to believe indispensable is item 6, the quality of writing. Writers often ask, "If the content in an article is accurate and important, won't editors just rewrite manuscripts that meet the other six criteria?" The answer is almost always a resounding no. No, because editors usually have an abundance of good, accurate, well-written articles from which to build each issue. Why should they be willing to use their time to do work that the writer should have done?

Only on the rare occasion when editors receive an *unusually* important and timely manuscript will they be willing to rewrite the manuscript. One editor said that in a *decade* of editing a journal, only once had he bothered to rewrite a poorly written manuscript. The particular manuscript that he rewrote presented a very creative and effective way to reduce heating expenses, and it came at the height of a national energy crisis. The message, here, is that authors should study these criteria, and consider each criterion on this list important enough to get their manuscripts rejected.

Most rating scales either contain a place for the reviewer to recommend action on the manuscript, or in the letter to the reviewer the editor asks for the recommendation. Usually, reviewers must recommend one of three actions: (1) acceptance as is (2) conditional acceptance provided that the author makes specific, requested changes (3) rejection. Authors often ask what they should do if an editor requires them to alter their manuscripts. Should you receive a request to change parts of your manuscript, make them eagerly, unless you think they misrepresent your manuscript by changing or distorting your intended meaning. The additional time and energy

put into fulfilling an editor's request is usually much less than you would spend sending the manuscript to another journal. The greatest benefit of making the requested changes is the time you will save on the life of the manuscript. In most cases editors' requests for changes significantly improve the quality of the article.

Using Libraries

Most experienced authors spend endless hours in libraries. They spend most of this time researching their topics. Even those writers who are leading experts in their field of study realize that their writings should reflect the current literature, and the only way to do this is by reading the most current books and journals on the topics on which they attempt to write.

Unfortunately, for many novice writers, the use of the library is limited to its research function. Some experienced writers get far more out of libraries. You, too, can get many valuable benefits if you learn how to make maximum use of the library. Following is a suggested method for using the library to perform several writing responsibilities.

Identifying Topics

Experienced authors learn to identify good topics much as news editors learn to "smell" a good story. As they go about their daily work, experienced writers carry a big question in their subconscious memory: "What would be a good topic for my next article or book?" Then they filter all of their observations through this perceptual screen. Consequently, at any one time, experienced writers can tell you several topics that they plan to write about.

Unfortunately, beginning writers often do not have on hand this supply of good topics. Consequently, they spend

a lot of valuable time trying to "think up" good topics. This process is too slow and it seldom results in quality topics. You can do better.

Chapter Two contains detailed information that you can use to perfect your topic selection skills, but you may feel that you do not have time to become a master at this task. You may want a quick way to identify a topic so that you can get on with the author's business at hand—writing. Here's where the library can help.

The library is the best, richest source for identifying good topics, topics that editors and readers will find captivating. Here's how the process works. First, locate your library's reference periodicals. They may be in the reference room, but in some libraries they are kept in the periodicals room or in another room. Find the *Business Index, Medical Index, Education Index* or whatever annual reference index your discipline offers. Begin by examining the annual topics list if your index has one; if not, examine the most recent issue. Scan the categories of topics until you find a topic that relates to one of your own professional roles. Now see how many articles are being published on this topic. You want a topic that has some degree of popularity in the literature. Repeat this process until you have found a topic that you find interesting. **Don't worry if you don't possess enough knowledge to write on this topic. One purpose for writing is to enlighten the writer on new topics.**

Identifying Target Journals

Suppose you have an idea for a topic. Let's say that you decide to write about the case study as a teaching method. As you think about this topic, you realize that there are several audiences who would benefit from learning more about the case study method. Elementary, middle, and high school teachers could surely profit from learning more about this method. In fact, many junior college and university professors make extensive use of

case studies; so another audience would be higher education faculty. Since teacher education colleges prepare teachers, teacher educators should know about the case study method. Today, K-12 school administrators are perceived as instructional leaders and are held accountable for the achievement level of all learners in their schools; so many administrators would be interested in learning about the case study method.

You could continue identifying target audiences, but to do so wouldn't be a good use of your time. It is now time to identify a tentative audience and direction for this topic. Suppose you decide to write for teacher educators. What journals are written for this audience? Of these journals, which ones would be interested in your topic? Some of them include *Educational Forum, The Journal of Teacher Education, Action in Teacher Education, The Professional Educator, Theory into Practice,* and *Phi Delta Kappan.* This is your first opportunity to really use the library. Most contemporary libraries have computer facilities. Most have programs that you can use to do quick searches on topics.

If your library does not offer this facility, don't worry; a simple reference index such as *Business Guide* or *Education Index* will do well. Looking up the topic "Case Study Method" you see several articles on this topic. Now see what journals published these articles. This tells you that the editors of these journals consider this topic relevant for their readers. If the list is short, a few alternative topics such as methods of teaching, lecture, simulation games, questioning, discovery, and inquiry can extend the list. Any editor who has published articles on any of these topics would probably welcome an opportunity to examine a manuscript on the case study method.

So far, you have used the library to collect data on publishers. Now you can use these data in two ways. First, you know which journals are interested in your

topic. You will remember and use this information when you begin selecting a journal to consider this manuscript. You also have more immediate use for this information. You can use it to shorten your search for data to use in writing this article.

Begin by taking a full-size tablet and drawing horizontal lines to divide the sheet into two equal parts. See Figure 6-6 for examples of what might go in two such parts.

FIGURE 6-6

A Systematic Approach to Researching Topics

Biddle, B.J. and Anderson, D.S. "Theory, Methods, Knowledge, and Research on Teaching," in *Handbook of Research on Teaching*, 3rd ed. ed. M.C. Wittrock (New York: Macmillan, 1986), pp. 230-252.

"Case studies provide an open invitation to generalize."

"Correctly used, the case study method will allow students to draw many conclusions, some of which the instructor may not even be aware."

- -

Copeland, M.T., "The Development of Principles by the Use of Cases," in *The Case Method of Instruction*, ed. C.E. Fraser (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1931).

"The more contrasting or seemingly contrasting situations that can be brought forth before the class for analysis, the greater, of course, will be the assurance with which the generalized conclusions can be stated."

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At the top of each one-half section on your note tablet, write complete bibliographical information for an article that sounds promising. *Caution: Do not abbreviate or omit*

any of the bibliographical information. Should you have to return to look up this information, you may spend several times as long searching for the information as is required to copy it down at this time. A similar search should be made of books, using the card catalog or computer. This task is easy and fun. You just look over the lists as though you were shopping and you have the money to buy anything you want. You will need several pages completed with two articles and/or books listed on each page.

Next, scan each article or book. Copy *verbatim* one or two quotations. Look for quotable quotes (i.e., quotations that say something meaningful and say it clearly). Check those in Figure 6-6.

Suppose the search revealed that the journal *Educational Forum* has recently published several articles aimed at improving teaching methods through improving practices in colleges of teacher education. Perhaps you should tentatively choose this journal and audience to target your article. Figure 6-6 also shows some quotable quotes from books. Notice that some of the books date back to the 1950s. Were these the only references used in our article, they would be too old; yet, these are valuable sources of data. Since the journal article quotations are recent, the references will be balanced. You can add currency to your references by beginning your journal searches with the current issues and working backward.

Figure 6-7 shows quotations taken from books. Read the last entry on this page, the second quotation by Dewing. This is a powerful testimony supporting the topic on which you may wish to write. Having quoted verbatim from the books, you can now choose between paraphrasing and quoting.

FIGURE 6-7

Many Excellent Quotations can be Lifted from Books

Entry No. 1

Donham, W.B. "Business teaching by the case system," in *The Case Method of Instruction,* ed., C.E. Prager (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1931).

When used to teach law, the case study method must have the following qualities:

- There must be a rich source of real cases.
- The study must be approached systematically, not haphazardly.
- There must be available books each containing a few carefully chosen cases.
- The cases must contain facts, the limitations to an issue, the opinion of the court, and the decision.
- The general principles involved in the case are developed through the discussion of concrete decisions of the court on problems that actually occurred.

"The distinguishing characteristics which makes the case system of teaching law, in the hands of a competent instructor, an instrument of great power is the fact that it arouses the interest of the student through its realistic flavor and then makes him, under the guidance of the instructor, an active rather than passive participant in the instruction."

- -

Entry No. 2

Dewing, A.S., "An Introduction to the Use of Cases," in *The Case Method at the Harvard Business School,* ed. M.P. McNair (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1954), p. 3.

"Of the many theories of education, there are actually only two. Education is the gathering of important information accumulated by human kind through the ages, followed by its refining, categorizing, and systematizing before presentation to students."

"Human thinking and the new human experience are indissolubly bound together. If we teach people to deal with the new experience, we teach them to think. In fact, power to deal with the new and power to think are pragmatically the same." p.4.

- -

Entry No. 3:

Christensen, C.R. *Teaching and the case study method,* 2nd ed. (Boston: Harvard Business School, 1987).

Use Your Own Expertise

As you plan and research your article topics, remember that prolific writers don't start at square one or point zero with each article. On the contrary, you must draw upon your own previously accumulated knowledge. Suppose you have written a research paper or you have conducted research for presentation at a professional conference for a paper or speech on the topic, *the role that concepts play in learning.* Suppose you also read in John Goodlad's school reform report, *A Place Called School,* that teachers must help students identify major concepts in their discipline. Go back to that study and gather a quotation that says that concept identification is important to teaching, and try to find a quotation that explains *why* concepts are important to teaching. Your goal is to use your existing repertoire of quotations to enrich and embellish this article. You might also look up "concept teaching" on the library computer or in the *Education Index* to gather another current reference. Continue your search until you have as many good references as you need to write your article.

Using Surveys

In a recent survey of the requirements of over 50 journals, I found that 90 percent of these journals report some research in their journals, and two-thirds of all the articles published in them report some research, although the data reported are frequently quoted from the research of others. This means that all serious writers should report some research. I conducted my survey about a subject that I am interested in: writing for professional journals. You could conduct a similar survey on any subject that interests you.

FIGURE 6-8

Questionnaire to Editors

** EDITOR'S INFORMATION FORM © 1989 Kenneth T. Henson*

Name of Editor _____

Name of Journal _____

Address _____

1. a. Approximate number of subscribers.
   b. Your primary audience is
   _____.
2. _____% of the contributors are university personnel.
   _____% are graduate students
   _____% are K-12 classroom teachers
   _____% are K-12 administrators
   _____% specialists
   _____% other:_____
3. _____ Refereed 10 yrs ago?
   _____ Refereed now?_____
   _____ If yes, nationally?
   _____ Or in the office (by the editor and/or the editorial staff)?
   _____ If refereed, is it anonymous?

* Use of this questionnaire without written permission from the copyright holder is prohibited by law.

_____ Other? Please explain_____.
_____ Do you provide referees with a rating instrument?

4. _____% of the articles in your journal report research data, i.e., what percent of the articles report the results of a study conducted by the author(s)?
5. _____% of the total number of articles published in one year relate to a particular theme issue.
6. _____% of all manuscripts received are accepted for publication.
7. _____ days lapse before we answer query letters. (please estimate)
8. _____ days lapse before we acknowledge receipt of a manuscript.
9. _____ weeks lapse before we make the publishing decision.
10. _____ months lapse between acceptance and actual publication.
11. _____ manuscript pages is our preferred article length. Our max. length is _____ pp. Our min. length is _____ pp.
12. In addition to the original, how many photo copies do you require? _____
13. Required style: _____ APA, _____ MLA, _____ Chicago, _____ Other
14. _____ Accept dot matrix? Letter quality? _____ Photocopies?
15. Good black & white photos would enhance acceptance in this journal? _____ none, _____ possibly, _____ likely
16. To inquire about possibly submitting a manuscript, do you welcome _____ query letters; _____ phone calls Which do you prefer?

_____

17. Some common mistakes made by contributors:

18. Recommendations to contributors:

Please return to:

Kenneth T. Henson, Dean
College of Education
Eastern Kentucky University
421 Combs Building
Richmond, KY 40475

Correctly designed and implemented, a survey can easily produce a large amount of important information. Furthermore, the survey can facilitate the writing of articles. The questionnaire in Figure 6-8 has yielded a series of articles for some premier journals. This questionnaire was designed by asking those questions that I would ask were I to meet the editors. By comparing this questionnaire to the articles in Figure 6-9, you can see the correlation between this questionnaire and these articles. The results have been four articles in the *Phi Delta Kappan*, one article in the *Training and Development Journal*, one article in the *NASSP Bulletin*, and a chapter in the *1991 Writer's Handbook*.

FIGURE 6-9

Articles Produced as a Result of Readministering the Survey to Editors

Henson, K.T. (December 1984). "Writing for professional publication." *Phi Delta Kappan, 65,* 635-637.

Henson, K.T. (April, 1986). "Writing for publication: Playing to win." *Phi Delta Kappan, 67,* 602-604.

Henson, K.T. (June, 1988). "Writing for education journals." *Phi Delta Kappan, 69,* 752-754.

Henson, K.T. (June, 1990). "Writing for education journals: Some facts to consider." *Phi Delta Kappan, 71.*

Toppins, A.D., Henson, K.T. and Solezio, E. (March, 1988). "What editors want: How to get published in HRD Journals." *Training and Development Journal,* 26-29.

Henson, K.T. (May, 1991). * "Six myths that haunt all writers." *The Writer.*

Henson, K.T. (at press). "Writing for education journals: Some mistakes and suggestions" in *NASSP Bulletin.*

*Reprinted in the 1991 *Writer's Handbook.*

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For almost a decade now, this questionnaire has been revised and re-administered biannually. When first used, this questionnaire had a 75 percent return rate. By its fourth use, the return rate had increased to 98 percent. This unusually high return rate can be attributed in part to the cover letter shown in Figure 6-10. Notice that the letter explains the advantage that its completion offers to the editors. The 98 percent return was achieved by sending two follow-up letters and making one follow-up phone call to each editor who failed to respond to the second mailing. Notice that the cover letter used for the 1990 survey (Figure 6-11) was designed to save the editor time. This is always an important consideration and it helps increase the return rate.

FIGURE 6-10

Cover Letter Mailed with Questionnaire

Dr. Thomas J. Buttery, Editor
American Middle School Education
University of Alabama
204 Graves Hall
P.O. Drawer R
Tuscaloosa, AL 35486

Dear Tom:

During the autumn of each odd year, I collect information to help prospective contributors improve the quality of manuscripts that they submit to education editors. I then attempt to report the results in a journal article.

If you would like to have your journal included in this report, please complete the enclosed questionnaire. For your convenience, I am enclosing a self-addressed, stamped envelope. I realize that your schedule is very demanding and thus will be most grateful of your time. Hopefully, the information you provide will save you time by reminding your future contributors of your requirements. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Kenneth T. Henson, Head
Curriculum and Instruction
enc: Editors' Questionnaire

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FIGURE 6-11

Cover Letter Revised to Save Editors Some Time

Dr. Nancy Geltman and
Dr. Susan Hebard, Editors
The Clearing House
4000 Albemarle St. N.W.
Washington, DC 20016

Dear Dr. Geltman and Dr. Hebard:

Enclosed please find a questionnaire that you completed for a survey several months ago.

The last time this questionnaire was mailed, one editor suggested that to save all the editors some time, I might return the last questionnaire and ask everyone just to note any changes, an excellent suggestion. So, will you please examine your questionnaire carefully and note any changes at your journal. I have included the last two items to provide room for your suggestions. Thanks very much for your participation.

Gratefully,

Kenneth T. Henson, Dean
College of Education

enc: Editors' Questionnaire, '89

When designing questionnaires remember to do the following:

1. Select a topic of importance to the respondents.
2. Keep the questionnaire short, no longer than one page whenever possible.
3. Word each question so that it can be answered easily and quickly.
4. Answer the questions yourself. When you find a question ambiguous, rewrite it.
5. Keep your article in mind, and sequence your questions accordingly.
6. Ask a couple of colleagues to complete the questionnaire, and rewrite any question for clarity that requires any explanation.

When sending questionnaires, consider the following actions:

1. Alert each recipient to the forthcoming questionnaire.
2. Enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope.
3. Send a follow-up letter to subjects who fail to respond.
4. After the follow-up letter, phone those subjects who fail to respond.
5. Promise to send the results to those subjects who wish to see them.
6. Thank respondents for their cooperation.

FIGURE 6-12

Questionnaire to Middle School Teachers (Page 1 of 6)

QUESTIONNAIRE

National Association of Middle School Administrators
and
The University of Alabama
204 Graves Hall, P.O. Drawer R, University, Alabama 35486

THE STATUS OF THE U.S. AMERICAN MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

A. Your Professional Preparation

1. What is the HIGHEST COLLEGE DEGREE you hold? Do not report honorary degrees. Check ONE.

   [ ] Two-year college diploma, degree, or certificate

   [ ] Bachelor's degree

   [ ] Master's degree

   [ ] Professional diploma based on six years of college study (Specialist Degree)

   [ ] Doctor's degree

   _____Major field Bachelor's degree

   _____Major field Master's degree

   _____Major field Specialist degree

   _____Major field Doctor's degree

2. In what YEAR did you receive your highest college degree?

   _____year

3. In what TYPE OF INSTITUTION did you take the largest part of your years of college education? For EACH degree held, write in the number corresponding to the type of institution in which you took the largest part of your work. (Please answer in terms of the type of institution it was when you were graduated.)

1 - Public (tax-supported university or land-grant college)

2 - Public teachers college

3 - Other public college

4 - Nonpublic (privately supported) university

5 - Nonpublic teachers college

6 - Other nonpublic college

_____Bachelor's degree

_____Master's degree

_____Professional diploma based on six years of college

_____Doctor's degree

4. In terms of actual contribution to your success in teaching, how would you evaluate the amount and quality of your UNDERGRADUATE TEACHER PREPARATION program in the following areas? Check ONE space for EACH area.

PART I:	AMOUNT of preparation was		
	Too little	About right	Too much
1. Depth of knowledge in the subject fields in which you specialized	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
2. General education—some knowledge in many fields	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
3. Psychology of learning and teaching	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
4. Human growth and development	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
5. Teaching methods	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
6. Classroom management, routines, discipline	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
7. History and philosophy of education	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
8. Use of audio-visual equipment and materials	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

PART II:	QUALITY of preparation was			
	No preparation	Satisfactory	Excellent	Poor
1. Depth of knowledge in the subject fields in which you specialized	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
2. General education—some knowledge in many fields	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
3. Psychology of learning and teaching	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
4. Human growth and development	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
5. Teaching methods	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
6. Classroom management, routines, discipline	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
7. History and philosophy of education	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
8. Use of audio-visual equipment and materials	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

The questionnaire shown in Figure 6-12 violates Guideline Number Two (page 124); in its original form, it is six pages long. Its construction, mailing, and interpretation took two years. Should you decide to use such a complex questionnaire, you should try to generate more than one article from the study. Correctly structured, this can be easily accomplished. This particular questionnaire produced all of the articles in Figure 6-13. Each major part of the questionnaire generated the data needed for one article.

FIGURE 6-13

Articles Based on Questionnaire:
The Status of the US American Middle School Teacher

1. Buttery, Thomas J., Henson, Kenneth T., and Chissom, Brad. (Summer, 1986). The Status of the Middle School Teacher: Professional Preparation. *American Middle School Education,* 9, (3), 26-31.
2. Buttery, Thomas J., Henson, Kenneth T., and Chissom, Brad. (Fall, 1986). The Status of the Middle School Teacher: Teaching Experience and Assignments. *American Middle School Education,* 9, (4): 34-39.
3. Chissom, Brad, Buttery, Thomas J., Chukabarah, Prince C., and Henson, Kenneth T. (Fall, 1987). A Qualitative Analysis of Variables Associated with Professional Satisfaction among Middle School Teachers. *Education,* 108, (1), 75-80.
4. Henson, Kenneth T., Buttery, Thomas J., and Chissom, Brad. (Spring, 1986). Improving Instruction in Middle Schools by Attending to Teachers' Needs. *American Middle School Education,* 9, 2-7.
5. Buttery, Thomas J., Henson, Kenneth T., and Chissom, Brad. (Summer, 1987). The Status of the Middle School Teacher: An Economic Perspective. *American Middle School Education,* 10, (2), 40-50.
6. Henson, Kenneth T., Buttery, Thomas J., and Chissom, Brad. (August, 1986). The Middle School Teacher: A Member of the Community. *The Middle School Journal,* 17, (4): 13-15.
7. Buttery, Thomas J., Henson, Kenneth T., and Chissom, Brad. (Spring, 1988). The Status of the Middle School Teacher: Personal Factors and Community Involvement. *American Middle School Education,* 11, (2): 55-65.
8. Henson, Kenneth T., Buttery, Thomas J., and Chissom, Brad. (November, 1986). The Middle School Teacher: As Perceived by Contemporary Teachers. *The Middle School Journal,* 18, (1), 22-23.

Perhaps you have noticed that two collaborators joined me on this study. Novice authors often ask whether they should work with colleagues. The answer depends on whether you have colleagues who are congenial, who have areas of expertise that complement your own, and who have efficient work habits. This questionnaire proved to be highly productive because each collaborator had a unique area of expertise (we were a researcher, an editor, and an author); all collaborators were task-oriented, and each member had harmonious working relationships with the other two.

Recapping the Major Points

1. By modeling your article after the characteristics of the articles in a journal, you can significantly improve your chances of acceptance in that journal.
2. You can determine the average manuscript length of a journal's articles by counting the words in an average line, multiplying by the number of lines in the article, and dividing by 300.
3. You can increase your chances of acceptance in a journal by keeping your manuscript near the length of the shortest article in the journal.
4. The reading level of your article should approximate that of the journal.
5. The surest and easiest way to make your manuscript fit a particular journal is to read a couple of recent issues of that journal and design your article accordingly.
6. Most journals have a set of author guidelines. If these are not printed in the journal, you can get a copy by writing to or phoning a secretary, assistant editor, or managing editor.

7. Journals are inflexible; therefore authors must follow the guidelines closely.
8. A common cause of rejection is sending manuscripts to a journal that is published for a different audience.
9. Only *rarely* will editors rewrite a poorly written manuscript.
10. The *Education Index* and similar reference guides can be used to identify appropriate article topics and journals for given topics.
11. Prolific writers relate their writing topics to their previously acquired knowledge, enabling them to use references with which they are already familiar.
12. References should always include a few current entries.
13. Whenever possible, keep surveys to one page because longer surveys have lower return rates.
14. The return rate for surveys can be increased by choosing a topic of concern to the subjects, and by designing the questions so they can be answered fast and easily.

Chapter Seven

THE MOST COMMON ERRORS (in Journal Writing)

The Nature of Writing

Almost every college campus has its own story of a resident genius super-writer who has only to pick up a pen or put the fingers on a keyboard and presto, words, paragraphs, and pages begin to flow. Even more astounding, this super-writer doesn't have to edit or rewrite: the first draft comes out perfectly! The story must be true because it is often told by the super-writer's own colleagues, and it is told with conviction.

Why would anyone purposefully distort the truth to such a degree knowing the harm that it does to aspiring authors? Could the purpose of such a fib be to demolish the human, would-be authors? Indeed, many novices who are already insecure about their abilities to write publishable articles must be devastated by the thought that for some of their peers perfect writing is an effortless process, a skill granted at birth.

James Raymond (1986) used the title of his book to remind would-be writers that **good writing doesn't come naturally or easily.** Raymond's book is titled *Writing (Is an Unnatural Act).* William Zinsser, author of *On Writing Well* (1988) cautions would-be writers that successful writing requires clear thinking, which must be learned. Says Zinsser, "Thinking clearly is a conscious act

that the writer must force upon himself. Just as if he were embarking on any other project that requires logic. "(p.12)

James Kilpatrick, author of *The Writer's Art,* (1984) says, "The construction of a good, solid sentence is no more a matter of instinct than the putting together of a dovetailed drawer." Although to many aspiring writers these comments may appear trite and unnecessary, they obviously are quite necessary because contributors to journals and magazines continue to make the same mistakes over and over. But you can do better. By knowing these mistakes before you write, you can avoid them.

The rest of this chapter is a report in order of their importance of the mistakes that editors say their contributors make most frequently. This information is based on 172 editor responses to two open-ended questions: "Some common mistakes made by contributors are...." and "Recommendations to contributors:_____." The statements are reported verbatim as they appeared on a recent questionnaire to editors.

Mistakes and Suggestions

Mistake No. 1: Lack of familiarity with the journal

According to the many editors who responded to this survey, **the most frequently cited mistake that contributors to journals make is their failure to acquaint themselves with the journal and its readers.** Ignorance about the target journals causes the most common error that contributors to these journals make— failure to design their articles so that they fit the intended journals.

Of all the comments that these editors made, the advice they offer most frequently is for authors to read some recent issues of the journal. A former editor of the *Journal of Teacher Education* says that the single most frequent mistake made by contributors to that journal is

"not addressing a topic of concern to their readers." For example, such journals as *The Journal of Teacher Education, Action in Teacher Education, The Teacher Educator,* and *The Professional Educator* are published for a specific audience: teacher educators. Yet, a large portion of the manuscripts sent to these journals are written for classroom teachers—clearly the wrong audience.

Another editor advised, "Read a few copies." This will help acquaint you with both the audience and the journal. Editors often use the expression, **"It is not right for our journal." This can mean that the manuscript is directed to another audience or it may mean that the way the article is written is unsuited to the audience.** For example, the article may be either too research-oriented or too pragmatic, too long or too short, too pedantic or too elementary; or it may mean that the article uses the wrong style for footnoting and referencing.

A quick glance at Figure 7-1 shows the wide range in style among journals in the same field. The first example is a complete article; the second example is a short paragraph taken from a very long article.

FIGURE 7-1: Part One

Journals in the Same Field Vary in Complexity

STUDENT TEACHERS UNLOCK LEARNING BARRIERS
School & Community; vol. 56, p. 37

The degree of learning which develops in any classroom is affected by the atmosphere in that classroom. The experienced teacher knows this varies so much that each class has its own personality. This atmosphere of "personality" is somewhat determined by a number of factors present in the class which present or disrupt the learning process. These factors may be labeled "learning barriers." The method which the teacher uses successfully today to remove learning barriers may not work so well tomorrow. A method successful with one class may be a failure with another. A method

successful for one teacher may never be successful for another. Such variations have prevented the discovery of methods which can be prescribed to overcome learning barriers in all situations; however, this is no indication that research cannot contribute to the removal of learning barriers.

Each teacher should be aware of the existence of learning barriers and of several methods for overcoming them. A number of methods affords selection of alternatives when the first attempt is unsuccessful. Analysis can identify these barriers and provide the teacher with a selection of methods and the knowledge of the degrees of success achieved through their use in situations similar to his own.

Following is a record of responses of ten student teachers of high school mathematics to some learning barriers which developed during a semester of student teaching. A conference was held with each student teacher immediately following each teaching period. During this meeting, the student teacher was reminded of his attempts to overcome barriers which threatened to disrupt the learning process during the preceding period. He then explained why he selected the particular method to deal with each situation.

Introducing a Concept:

Mister Wells observed that in his classes certain behavioral problems which disrupt the learning process are most abundant immediately following an introduction of new subject material and decrease after the students began to grasp an understanding of the new material.

This suggested to him that failure to understand is often the cause of inattentiveness and a special effort should be taken to make sure that the boisterous students understand new lessons. Since more misunderstanding is present during this period, the teacher should avoid traveling at a pace which students cannot follow. He should be careful to explain newly introduced material thoroughly, not assuming that students have information which is basic to the new concepts, but assuring that each student has this necessary background, before proceeding into the new area.

FIGURE 7-1: Part Two

THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL JOURNAL

Long-Term Academic Effects of the Direct Instruction Project Follow Through

Linda A. Meyer

There are generally high correlations between MAT and WRAT end-of-third-grade reading scores and ninth-grade reading. Third-grade MAT total reading scores and ninth-grade total reading scores correlate .78 for cohort 2 and .81 for cohort 3. The end-of-third-grade WRAT reading scores and ninth-grade reading scores correlate .47 for cohort 1, .71 for cohort 2, and .73 for cohort 3. End-of-third-grade WRAT math scores correlate with ninth-grade math scores .49 for cohort 1, and .39 for cohorts 2 and 3. Slosson IQ scores were .37 for cohort 1 and .49 for cohort 2. Ninth-grade math scores and Slosson IQ scores correlated .20 for cohort 1, and .49 for cohort 2.

Suppose you have prepared a manuscript for submission to one of these journals. In what ways would it be inappropriate to submit this article to the other journal? In addition to submitting their manuscripts to journals within their fields, **most prolific writers also have a group of journals outside their subject specialty to which they occasionally submit manuscripts.** This widens the diversity of journal requirements, making it even more important to make certain that your manuscripts are designed to fit the journals to which you plan to submit them.

The expression, "It's not right for our journal" can also mean that this topic is not a topic that our readers would choose. It could also mean that the language is inappropriate. Reexamine the two articles in Figure 7-1. One is read by professors and doctoral students; the other is read by practicing elementary school teachers. As you

compare these, listen to the tone of the language. Is one more pedantic? Scholarly? Chatty? One of the articles has no references; the other has 26. Can you guess which? Can you tell which audience is professors and doctoral students? How?

Now consider how much better the editors of these journals know their readers. The next time you hear an editor say "It's not right for our journal," realize that the editor has discovered a polite way to say that you haven't done your homework. It's your responsibility to study your journals and make your articles fit the audiences' expectations. You must write about topics that have special appeal to those who read your journals, and you must learn to be flexible and adapt your writing style so that your manuscripts conform to the style of each journal to which you submit. By examining the table of contents of a few copies of each journal you can easily develop a sense of what these readers consider important. By studying the style of each journal you can prepare manuscripts that will appear familiar to the readers. You can do it, and you must.

Mistake No. 2: Wrong style

Rita Dunn (1986) ,who has authored and collaborated to produce more than 300 articles and monographs, says that she has learned that **the journals won't change, nor will they make exceptions to accommodate the style of manuscripts.** Journals that use the Chicago style will not accept manuscripts written in APA style and vice versa. Journals that accept 10- to 12-page manuscripts are unlikely to accept a 20- to 30-page manuscript and vice versa. This survey found that using incorrect style is authors' second most frequent error.

Just inside the front cover, most journals tell prospective contributors what style to use. If the style is not mentioned, authors can send a written request for a copy of the guidelines.

Because asking the editor for a copy of guidelines reveals a certain ignorance about the journal, you may be wiser to examine a few recent articles in the journal to determine the appropriate style. When your manuscript is completed, always make a final check to see that the citations (or footnotes) in the manuscript match those at the end of the article.

Mistake No. 3: Failure to check for grammatical errors

How serious is this error? One editor says that he counts grammatical errors like an umpire counts strikes. Incidentally, he allows some errors, but just one mistake over the number allowed and the manuscript enters the rejection file.

Nobody can avoid mistakes; yet, **you can and should refuse to share your errors with editors.** Never let the editor be your first reader. Several of these editors recommend that you let at least two or three colleagues read your manuscript before sending it to anyone. Preferably these readers should read critically and react honestly. You need someone who offers specific feedback and suggestions, not a doting spouse, not an envious colleague, but an objective critic who will offer specific suggestions and who will tell you if the manuscript is confusing or shallow. Another suggestion is to give your manuscript a cold reading. **Put it aside for a few days before your final reading. This allows errors to crystallize and become visible to the author.** A good practice is to begin writing another manuscript immediately upon completing the current one. Some authors work on several manuscripts simultaneously, putting each aside for a day or two and returning later with a fresh perspective.

Mistake No. 4: Failure to include substance

When researching the art of writing for research journals, Halpin and Halpin (1986) asked the editors, "What

is the most important quality that you look for in a manuscript?" An editor responded, "I suppose that the most important quality is that the article makes some unique contribution, however small." Yet, the editors' comments in the current survey reveal that many manuscripts sent to these journals fail to offer anything new. Responding to the question about the most common mistakes that contributors make, the editor of *Contemporary Education* said, "Old Hat; Old Stuff." The editor of *Vocational Education* said, "Rehash of well-known information." The editor of another journal said, "Much ado about nothing."

An examination of some of the other responses gives a definite clue as to how writers can avoid this criticism. The editor of *The High School Journal* lists as a common mistake, "No data base." The editor of *Journal of Research in Science Teaching* says, "Not making a new contribution."

This survey found that 95 percent of these journals regularly report research findings in some of their articles. Some of the journals publish only research findings. Thirty percent of the editors say that at least 90 percent of their articles report the author's own research. **The market for data based articles is simply too large to be ignored by serious writers.** To assure that a manuscript makes a contribution, a well-conceptualized questionnaire can provide the needed data.

Remember, also, that authors are not limited to reporting their own research; relevant data and the opinions of other experts in the field can be used to buttress your article. Figure 7-2 shows a page taken from a five-page article. Notice that approximately every other sentence refers to another author's work. Indeed, in one instance, two works are cited within the same sentence. This five-page article had 27 references. Some of the references are included because they introduce new informa-

tion on the topic; others were chosen because they verify the author's comments.

A major common error of aspiring writers is the mistaken belief that articles must be written in the pattern of the scientific method. This belief is a strong deterrent to authors who are uncomfortable with research. An equally damaging belief is that in order to use research in their writings, writers must conduct research studies. But this idea, too, is all wrong. As you can see in the article 7-2, although some of the references report research, others only report another writer's opinion. You should not hesitate to quote authors' opinions taken from professional books and journals.

FIGURE 7-2

Authors can Give Much Enrichment, Substance, and Credibility to their Articles by Referencing Relevant Articles and Books Written by Others in their Fields

[T]eachers must first learn proper methods of using inquiry learning. When using inquiry, the main role of the instructor is that of a catalyst to encourage students to make and test their own hypotheses,[22] since "case studies provide an open invitation to generalize."[23]

Finally, the instructor can use the case study method to cross-examine the students. Although we typically recognize the word "cross-examine" as a legal term, this approach is also widely used in business education programs and has been cited by some as the most desirable way to use the case method in business.[24]

These four approaches are the most common for using case studies.[25] Instructors should mix and sequence these approaches so that their students will be exposed to the benefits of all of them, while simultaneously learning to enjoy a variety of activities in their daily classes.

A recent variation for using the case method is the development of case study computer simulations. According to Zappia, "Many computer simulation games are designed so that they provide all the positive elements of the case method, but games have an added dimension...they permit the students to see the actual consequences of their decisions."[26]

When using the case study, all decisions should be based on involving the students in positive ways. As Ahmadian explains, "The Key to capturing potential (that has got to be tapped) is to cause students to become deeply involved, both emotionally and intellectually, in the analysis and resolution of cases. It has been found that case analysis and resolution must be supported by textual material and instruction guidance."[27] Used in such a way, the case study method becomes a tool that can help instructors bring meaning to the increased field experience components of their programs.

Mistake No. 5: Failure to write simply and clearly

Having something to say is one thing; saying it simply and clearly is another. Time after time these editors made emphatic statements addressing this need. Tying the two needs together, the editor of *American Middle School Education* said, "Articles [in our journal] are evaluated for substantive content and quality readability or thought flow." The editor of *Contemporary Education* said that his journal often rejects manuscripts because they "lack coherence."

First, the article must have a distinct message and this message must be clearly stated in the title. Then, it must be clarified in the first paragraph. The comments of the editor of *Middle School Journal* captured both of these ideas: "Entice your reader with a title and [with your] opening paragraph." Communicating the purpose of the article immediately is absolutely essential. The *NASSP Bulletin* editor said, "Contributors do not write interesting opening paragraphs. **If editors aren't excited with openings,**

how will readers react?" The editor of *Journal of Reading Behavior* said that she considers her contributors' biggest mistake is "including identifying information in the body of the manuscript which the editor must sniff out."

Just how important is getting your idea across clearly in the beginning of your article? Think of yourself as a salesperson. If your income came from the sales you made, you would find a way clearly and quickly to communicate the strengths of your product. **Writers, too, are salespersons who must compete with all other writers who submit to the same journal.** Like potential customers who purchase goods, readers of professional journals will turn to other sources rather than labor to understand your meaning.

To assure that your writing is simple and clear, develop and use a simple and concise style. One editor called for simplicity when he complained of "overuse of jargon" and "pedantic style." The editor of *The Reading Teacher* and of the *Journal of Reading* echoed this concern in one of her criticisms: "Writing in pompous, academic style." Her following advice is good: "Write in a straightforward manner as if speaking to practitioners." *Educational Record's* editor says, "We look for nonacademic [writing style]." The editor of *Theory into Practice* makes an excellent suggestion to improve clarity: "Examples should be used to explain difficult concepts."

Following are some additional suggestions to improve clarity:

First, **if your target journal permits, *use headings.*** A brief survey of a current or recent issue can provide this information.

Second, ***use short, familiar words.*** For example, the word "use" is preferable over the word "utilize." "Administer" is better than "administrate," which, though commonly found in professional literature, isn't even a word. Use "change" instead of "effectuate."

Third, ***use short sentences and short paragraphs.***

Fourth, ***avoid clichés.***

Fifth, ***edit.*** As you reread your drafts, remove every unnecessary paragraph, sentence, and word.

Sixth, ***read and follow*** the advice found in such works as *The Elements of Style*, by William Strunk, Jr. and E. B. White. **So long as anyone reading a single sentence of your writing has to reread the sentence for understanding, you have not yet achieved simplicity and clarity.**

Figure 7-3 summarizes the most common mistakes, with recommendations for their correction.

FIGURE 7-3

Common Mistakes and Recommendations

Common Mistakes	Recommendations
Lack of familiarity with the journal	Read a few recent issues.
Wrong style	Check inside the front cover for directions. If there are none, write for a copy of the journal's guidelines for contributors.
Grammatical errors	Proof and correct. Wait a few days and give it a cold reading. Ask associates to read and critique your articles.
Failure to include substance	Consider using a survey to gather data. Review current articles and important books, and reference these works in the body of your manuscript.
Pedantic writing	Avoid using unnecessary jargon. Identify your distinct message and state it in the title. Use familiar words, short sentences, and short paragraphs.

Other Helpful Suggestions

These errors are the most common mistakes that contributors make, but they are by no means the only mistakes. Following are other *suggestions* that editors offer to help beginning writers improve their chances of getting their manuscripts accepted.

Select Your Target Journals in Advance

Even **before you begin writing, take time to select some target journals.** Only then can you design your manuscript to make it fit these journals. The assistant editor of the *Peabody Journal of Education* says, "Scholars should do their homework when selecting a journal." This task is just as much a part of becoming a successful writer as writing the manuscript itself. This is why the editor of *Educational Record* wrote, "Read our magazine before you submit (or ideally, [before you] write) an article." Failure to select your target journals and tailor your articles to these journals could lead to the problem referred to by a former editor of the *Journal of Teacher Education,* "Not addressing a topic of concern [to our readers]."

Identify Coming Themes

Most professional journals publish some theme issues each year. Alexander L. Pickins, editor of *Educational Perspectives,* was referring to these themes when he said, "Inquire regarding forthcoming themes—write toward a theme for which your expertise exists." Some journals have no theme issues; other journals have *only* theme issues; most journals have both theme and non-theme issues. Most of these journals receive considerably fewer manuscripts aimed at the theme issues. Often three or four times as many manuscripts are received for non-themed issues as are received for themed issues. This means that **by keeping advised of the coming themes in your journals and writing for those themes, you**

can increase your chances for acceptance in this journal by 300 to 400 percent. To achieve this goal, you must write your article and submit it before the deadline date. You can learn about forthcoming themes and deadline dates for submitting to the theme issues by examining several recent issues of each journal. At least one issue of most journals will carry this information for the coming year.

Title Correctly

Responding to the question about common mistakes contributors make, the editor of *Middle School Journal* wrote, "Terrible titles." Entice your readers with a title that is inviting and one which describes the content of your manuscript. Whenever possible, use your title to make a commitment to your readers. (See Chapter 2.)

Opening Paragraph

Like the title, the opening paragraph should hook and hold the reader's attention. Like those boring speakers who use the first few minutes to get to the subject of their presentation, many would-be writers use the first paragraph or two to begin focusing their writing. By the second or third page they attain clarity in their own thinking about the article, and the reading picks up. Unfortunately, many readers will become bored and give up before reaching the *good stuff.*

The editor of the *NASSP Bulletin* listed as a common mistake, "Contributors do not write interesting opening paragraphs. If editors aren't excited with [the] opening, how will the readers be?" To make your opening paragraphs more stimulating, immediately tell the reader what the article is about and what you intend to do about it. Too often, writers fail to achieve this goal.

Avoid Provincialism

Beginning writers have a tendency to write about their own experiences. Perhaps the best advice that can be given to fiction writers is to write about the people and places they know best. This usually translates to mean that you should write about your own community. The great editor Maxwell Perkins who edited for such famous writers as F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Ernest Hemingway advised Marjorie Rawlings to stop trying to write Gothic novels of which she knew very little and instead to write about her own community and the people she knew. Marjorie had moved to Florida to become a writer. With each hopeless manuscript that she sent to Mr. Perkins, she described her new friends and neighbors. Her letters were so interesting and her manuscripts were so bad that Maxwell Perkins advised her to stop writing the Gothic horrors and start writing about her friends and neighbors.

At first, Marjorie was angered at being told that she didn't know enough about her favorite type of novel. After all, for years she had spent most of her leisure time reading Gothic stories. Fortunately, like most good writers, Marjorie was determined to try anything, even her editor's advice. In her Florida swamp, she wrote about her neighbors. Her book, *The Yearling,* won a Pulitzer Prize in 1939. Just three years later she completed her autobiography as a backwoods dweller. This book, *Cross Creek,* was a best seller.

Without much effort you can think of a great writer in your own locale: a Zane Grey, Eudora Welty, Samuel Clemens, or James Street, successful because they captured the life styles of the people they knew best. By contrast, for the nonfiction writer, provincialism can become a deadly trap.

So you are an entrepreneur who wants to write about a business that you personally nurtured to health against

overwhelming odds. Fine! This is a story that should be told. The dilemma lies in that few people will want to read a nonfiction business book unless they can identify closely with the circumstances, so closely that they can transfer your story to their own locale, and your experience to their own business. Here's where you must help. **By offering examples, you can make your story pertinent to other types of businesses and to other geographic areas.**

A novice writer in Eastern Kentucky is currently writing about a partnership program between a local school system and a coal mining industry. Initially the author wrote specifically about her home town, providing names of the town, industry, local school superintendent, and company officials. Unlike the characters in well-written fiction, her characters were not developed so that the reader could identify strongly with them; therefore, to talk extensively and personally about them was inappropriate. Her intent was not to have the reader feel compassion, anger, or other emotions about the characters. Introducing the name of the town, the industry, and the people was not so inappropriate, but talking extensively about them might exclude entrepreneurs in other areas and in other types of business.

A second approach to overcoming this limitation is to offer examples explaining how people in other businesses in other locations can benefit from the article. The writer could tell how other partnerships could be developed. Following is an example of such an article.

FIGURE 7-4

Nonfiction Authors Must Help Readers See Ways of Using the Information

THE TEACHER-IN-RESIDENCE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

by Kenneth T. Henson

Introduction

The central theme of the commission reports and task force studies has been that we must improve the quality of education. These reports have not prescribed standardized answers, but they have encouraged entrepreneurship at the state and local levels. Collaborative efforts and programs have been initiated to lubricate the wheels of progress. These include programs between state and federal levels, schools and communities, businesses and schools. The focus of this "Promising Practice" is on a partnership program among the Tuscaloosa City School System, the Tuscaloosa County School System, and The University of Alabama's College of Education.

The program, titled "Teacher in Residence (TIR) Partnership Program," involves two outstanding classroom teachers selected to serve as regular full-time faculty members in the College of Education's Early Childhood and Elementary Education undergraduate teacher preparation programs.

Planning sessions were held between the two superintendents of the LEA's, the Dean of the College of Education, the Head of Curriculum and Instruction, and the Chairperson of Early Childhood and Elementary Education. After approval from the appropriate boards, the following guidelines were instituted.

Fellows

An outstanding primary (1-3) grade teacher would be cooperatively selected from the County school system and an outstanding intermediate (4-6) level teacher would be selected from the City school system. The TIR Fellows would serve as

faculty members with the University in a fashion similar to an adjunct or visiting professor....

> *Notice in this article that the names of several participants are given. Do you find this a little distracting?*

Advantages

The advantages of the program are numerous. The Fellows have the opportunity to experience new, invigorating roles. Mrs. Schweer has observed, "I anticipated the University staff being cautious about my participating; but in reality, I experienced complete cooperation and acceptance." Both Mrs. Schweer and Mrs. Nancy Rogers have expressed their interest in gaining a firsthand understanding of the program philosophy, objectives, and sequencing. Additionally, they have the satisfaction of directly influencing future teachers. Mrs. Rogers observed, "I believe that because of my everyday classroom teaching experiences, I can personalize and bring to life methods and procedures that might otherwise seem only theory."

Upon completion of the program, the school systems gain teachers who have had experiences which will be invaluable in helping them to plan and institutionalize inservice programs. Both school systems employ many University of Alabama graduates. Having their own teachers directly participating in the preparation program significantly increases the sense of joint ownership in the task of preparing new teachers for the profession.

The College of Education will have gained the assistance of master level teachers who have a very contemporary understanding of the classroom. Having on staff teachers who are recognized as superior affords University students the opportunity to interact with those who are meeting the challenge of today's classroom and who will continue to meet those challenges in the future.

A final advantage for both the school systems and the University will be the emergence of a cadre of teachers who will have valuable experience having worked in both settings. This will help the development of new partnerships between the University and the school systems.

The sample "Teachers-In-Residence" article has encouraged other school systems in other college towns to develop similar partnerships. Much of the article focuses on the "how-to" process rather than describing the characters.

Figure 7-5 illustrates a different way to universalize an individual discovery. In your own profession, you may have discovered a way to overcome a major problem that confronts all people in your type of business. Why not write an article about it?

FIGURE 7-5

Nonfiction Authors Should Choose Topics that Explain How Others can Use the Information

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA SUMMER INSTITUTE FOR PHYSICS TEACHERS: A RESPONSE TO A CRITICAL SHORTAGE

Kenneth T. Henson, College of Education, University of Alabama

Philip W. Coulter, Department of Physics and Astronomy

J. W. Harrell, College of Arts and Sciences

For several years, the state of Alabama, like most other states, has had a severe shortage of qualified physics teachers.[1,2] Responding to this need, three years ago the Head of Curriculum and Instruction in the College of Education joined with an Assistant Dean in the College of Arts and Sciences to write a cooperative grant. The result was a rigorous, 10-week

summer institute for uncertified physics teachers, funded by the State Department of Education. The proposal has since been revised twice by the Head of Curriculum and Instruction and by faculty in the Department of Physics and Astronomy. Both revisions have been funded, providing a second and third summer institute.

All three institutes have received excellent evaluations from the participants and from representatives from the State Department of Education. Several features have enabled this institute to compete successfully with other universities for funding for three consecutive years.

First, all teachers selected for participation in the institute are inadequately prepared to teach physics and do not hold teacher certificates in physics. Though unqualified, all participants are selected to teach physics next year. Therefore, they arrive motivated, wanting to learn everything they possibly can about physics. This sense of purpose and the inquiring attitude that it promotes are essential to the endurance and the success of the participants in the institute.

Second, the University of Alabama Physics Teachers Institute is very rigorous. It runs for 10 full weeks, all participants take 12 credit hours of physics courses, and all courses must be taken for credit. The intensity of this program draws serious teachers who come determined to succeed.

> *This article was easy to write. I just described the program, step-by-step. The first draft took about two hours to write.*

Third, the University of Alabama Physics Teachers Institute is practical. Most of the laboratory experiments chosen complement the high school textbook and require inexpensive equipment. (A special course uses the state's most frequently used high school textbook, examines applicable software, and emphasizes classroom demonstrations).

Fourth, a weekly seminar utilizes the resources of a major research university. Faculty from throughout the University campus give lectures and demonstrations on such topics as lasers, quasars, robotics, and biophysics.

The University of Alabama Physics Teachers Institute has one goal–to enable every participant to be more effective next fall, and it has ways to assure that this happens. Following the institute, co-directors will make a follow-up visit to all teachers' schools. The purposes are: (1) to determine which aspects of the institute the teacher has found most useful and (2) to determine further ways to improve the quality of the institute for another year (in hopes that the institute will be funded the coming year).

Each summer, adjustments have been made to improve the institute. First, a special section of introductory physics was created for these teachers alone, providing them freedom to ask questions that concern teachers and eliminating the initial anxiety that comes from competing with regular University students. Second, a first-year attempt to use a high school physics teacher to teach the high school text was not successful. Although the teacher was truly a master teacher, the participants did not give her the respect that is automatically afforded a university professor. Therefore, a high school teacher was replaced by a university physics professor. Finally, the third summer, teachers were provided opportunities to have their demonstrations and experiments videotaped to take back with them and use in their classes.

Because of the high degree of success of these institutes, and because of the help that they are giving to small, rural schools throughout the state, the Alabama Coalition of Citizens for Excellence in Small Schools has funded an Advanced Physics Institute at the University. The first advanced institute was held during the early 1986 summer term. Six teachers who had attended either the 1984 or the 1985 institute attended the advanced institute.

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Notice that this article focuses on the process involved. The *Physics Teacher* printed this article because it addresses a critical problem that every state in the country currently faces, and it offers the readers a step-by-step way to resolve their similar problem. Notice that the authors of this article tell the readers precisely how they can use this process to provide more qualified physics teachers in their respective states.

Check Your Manuscript

A final precaution: Before sending your manuscript, take time to proofread it thoroughly. One editor advises, **"Prior to submitting any manuscript, anywhere, have at least 2 or 3 colleagues read [the] text for critical commentary."** This is good advice because we often make the same mistakes repeatedly, and we are prone to overlook some mistakes again and again.

The co-editors of *Psychological Reports* and *Perceptual Motor Skills* take a different perspective, but a very good one. They say, "Be of good cheer. **Take time to do the job correctly, and check everything yourself.** Consult with an expert when you need to." Remember that time spent clearing out errors is a very economical investment. Once the manuscript is in the mail, it is difficult to make corrections.

Some Final Thoughts

All of these criticisms and suggestions are both sound and necessary. Their credibility is assured because their sources are experienced, professional editors. Avoiding these criticisms is an absolute necessity because these editors reject 4 out of every 5 manuscripts they receive. To assure that the readers receive the benefit from the expertise of these 50-plus editors of leading journals, I have purposefully refrained from giving advice based only on my own experience, but I agree with the editors, so I end this chapter with advice that I give to beginning authors, advice offered as well by the editor of *The Teacher Educator:* one word ----"Think!"

Recapping the Major Points

As time passes, many trends and fashions come and go. Where writing is concerned, many errors never seem to go out of style. Through the years, many errors have remained fashionable and they continue to trip authors. You can escape the damage that these errors do if you remember to do the following:

1. Identify a few journals that you wish to have publish your manuscripts. Consider journals in your specific content field, and also consider more general journals and journals in related fields.
2. Familiarize yourself with those journals to which you submit your manuscripts. Very carefully read a few recent copies of each journal, paying close attention to its level of complexity, article length, types of topics, and documentation style.
3. Check your manuscript for errors. Then ask an impartial colleague to critique it. If your typewriter or computer provides a spell check, use it. Finally, put the manuscript aside for a few days and proof it again.

4. Be sure that each of your manuscripts offers substance. Simply stated, be sure you have something worthwhile to say. You can begin by selecting topics that you really know about; then use the library to add to your substance. You may also wish to consider using a questionnaire to collect data to report in your articles. Finally, check the title and the lead sentence to see that both reflect the article's main message.
5. Write simply and clearly. Begin by knowing your main message, then structure your articles to make sure that this substance stands out to even the most casual reader. Avoid jargon, clichés, and unnecessarily complex and lengthy words, sentences, and paragraphs.
6. Having selected your target journals in advance and having read a few recent issues of each, now design your manuscripts to fit each journal.
7. Give each manuscript a captivating title that reflects the main message in the manuscript; then give it a lead sentence and lead paragraph explaining what the article is going to say about this topic.
8. Since your chances of acceptance by a journal are three or four times as great in themed issues as in non-themed issues, know when your journal themes are coming; time your manuscripts to coincide with these themes.
9. Explain how your manuscript content can be applied to programs throughout the country.

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Chapter Eight

COMMUNICATING WITH JOURNAL EDITORS

The Author/Editor Relationship

Successful writing for publication has two requirements. Authors must learn how to write correctly. Writers must learn how to communicate with editors. Just as good manuscript writing involves mastering certain techniques, **learning to communicate with editors also requires mastering specific skills**. Basic to mastering those skills needed to communicate effectively with editors is the understanding of the editor's role and the relationship between writers and editors.

Beginning writers often perceive editors as their opponents. Only a few rejection letters are needed to convince many aspiring writers that the editor's main job is to pass negative judgement on the author's work. A few more rejection letters may convince the beginning author that editors are really sick people who derive their life's pleasure from rejecting and putting down writers. Some successful novices, however, pick themselves up, shake themselves off, and conclude that this is really a game of competition between the author and editors. To these individuals, the editor is the major opponent, and this sense of competition is all they need to succeed.

But you can do better. Begin by accepting that **all editors would rather receive good manuscripts than poor ones**. Most editors get no pleasure from re-

jecting manuscripts, but they get much satisfaction from accepting good manuscripts. Realize that editors and writers are not natural enemies. On the contrary, **the author-editor relationship is a symbiotic one. When authors succeed, editors succeed.** Authors and editors share the same goal. That goal is to produce a high-quality article for the readers on a topic that the readers find relevant. The article must give the readers something that they need and want, and it must present this information in a way that the readers can easily understand the author's message. There are many possible channels of communication between the author and editor, and some of these are much more effective than others. **The correct choice of communication channel should be based on knowledge about the editor's preferences and knowledge about the advantages that each communication channel offers the writer.**

The Telephone

Some beginning writers go directly to the telephone and call the editors of those journals to which they wish to submit manuscripts. Some editors welcome and actually prefer this channel of communication even for use by unknown writers. Other editors prefer not to get phone calls. Should you choose to call, remember that editors are very busy. **Keep your call brief and to the point.** Think through your conversation *before* you call and know exactly what questions you wish to ask. Be able to describe your manuscript clearly and specifically.

Successful writers determine the preferences of the editors of their target journals. They often research their journals to learn the editors' preferences. **Sometimes journal articles tell the requirements and preferences of their editors.** For example, a recent issue of a publication of the American Society for Training and De-

FIGURE 8-1

Preferences of Business Journals

	Acceptance Rate (%)	Refereed	Number of Subscribers	% of University Contributors	Prefer Query Letters	Welcome Phone Calls	Days to Answer Query Letters	Days to Ackn. Manuscript Receipt	Months Required for Publication
Academy of Management Journal	11	yes	8,900	95	no	yes	1	1	15
Academy of Management Review	12	yes	9,500	99	yes	yes	7	1	8
California Management Review	15	yes	5,500	85	no	no	7	1	6
Journal of Applied Behavioral Science	10	yes	3,000	80	yes	yes	7	7	11
Journal of Human Resources	15	yes	3,000	90	no	yes	14	7	12
Journal of Instructional Development	35	yes	1,500	83	yes	yes	14	3	4
Journal of Management	3	yes	1,300	95	no	yes	5	1	12
Journal of Management Development	35	yes	1,000	70	yes	yes	10	10	4
Management Review	11	yes	8,900	95	no	yes	1	1	15
Organizational Dynamics	12	yes	9,500	99	yes	yes	7	1	8
Personnel Administrator	15	yes	5,500	85	no	no	7	1	6
Personnel Journal	10	yes	3,000	80	yes	yes	7	7	11
Psychology Today	15	yes	3,000	90	no	yes	14	7	12
Training & Development Journal	35	yes	1,500	83	yes	yes	14	3	4
Training	3	yes	1,300	95	no	yes	5	1	12

KEY: Descriptive: D Action: A Causal-Comparative: CC
Theoretical Model Building: T Historical: H

FIGURE 8-1 (continued)

Preferences of Business Journals

Preferred Length of MSS (# pages)	Minimum/Maximum Pages	Theme Issues per Year (%)	Articles Reporting Research (%)	Types of Research (key below)	Number of Photocopies	Accept Letter-Quality Printouts	Accept Dot-Matrix Printouts	Effect of Photos on Acceptance
30	10/50	0	100	D,H,A,CC,Q,C,E	5	yes	yes	no
25	1/25	0	100	T	2	yes	no	–
25	15/30	20	50	D,H,CC,C,E,T	3	yes	yes	Psbl 8 x 10
20	10/30	25	95	D,H,A,CC,Q,V,C,E,T	5	yes	no	no
25	–	–	99	E,T,econ,emprcl	5	yes	yes	no
25	15/30	25	25	D,Q,V,T	4	yes	no	no
23	15/25	0	90	D,H,CC,Q,C,E,T	3	yes	yes	Psbl 5 x 7
–	–	50	50	D,H,A,V,T	–	yes	–	no
–	8/20	100	25	D,H,A,CC,V,C,E	0	yes	no	Psbl 8 x 10
23	–	0	33	D,H,A,CC,V,T	2	yes	no	no
10	5/15	100	30	CC,V,C,T	3	yes	no	Lkly 5 x 7
12	8/25	0	1	–	1	yes	yes	no
10	–	25	75	E	0	yes	yes	no
15	10/20	0	8	A,Q,E,T	1	yes	yes	no
10	1/15	0	6	D,A,CC,E,T	1	yes	no	Lkly 5 x 7

Quasi-Experimental: Q Developmental: V
Correlational: C Experimental: E

velopment, *Training and Development Journal,* contained an article giving the communication channel preference for several business journals. Figure 8-1 is a list of the preferences of these journals. The information found in this chart was derived from a questionnaire sent to the editors of these journals.

Pick Your Journal

From Figure 8-1 you can gather many important facts about these business journals. First, notice the key at the bottom of the Figure. Identifying the journals in terms of these nine categories can prove useful to authors. For example, suppose you want to write for journals that publish experimental results. A quick glance down the *Types of Research* column lets you quickly identify the journals that publish your kind of writing.

Scanning the column headings you will quickly learn such important facts about each journal as its acceptance rate, whether it is refereed, the number of subscribers, and how long it takes to get a response from your query letter or your manuscript. You will also learn a lot of information about the journal's requirements, a great help in preparing a better manuscript. Using this chart can help you significantly improve your acceptance rates with these journals.

Information like this about education journals appears periodically in the *Phi Delta Kappan* (Dec. 84; April 86; April 88; June 90). Figure 8-2 shows the most recent results of a biennial survey of over 50 education journals.

FIGURE 8-2

Preferences of Education Journals

Reprinted from the June 1988 Phi Delta Kappan

WRITING FOR EDUCATION JOURNALS

Here are some timely answers to questions that nag at would-be writers.

by Kenneth T. Henson

In the course of conducting workshops, I have the opportunity to speak directly to a few hundred professionals each year about their concerns related to writing for publication in professional journals. During each workshop, I collect questions from the participants. Though my audiences vary widely—ranging from professors, teachers, and librarians to business people, health care professionals, and government employees—many of the questions they ask remain the same.

To enable me to offer timely answers to these recurring questions, I assemble a questionnaire every two years and mail it to the editors of some prominent education journals. Then I share the findings through articles such as this one. The information reported is drawn from the 49 usable responses I received from a mailing of 65 questionnaires; the return rate was 75%. (This questionnaire was administered again in 1987 generating a 98% return. The technique will be explained later.)

One of the questions that nags at writers is, What motivates professional people to write for publication? While institutional pressure is brought to bear through the linking of tenure, promotions, and merit pay to publications, this pressure is not the only reason that professionals write. Each profession has its body of specialized knowledge, and most writers want to contribute new knowledge to that pool, thereby advancing the profession.

Whether in response to institutional pressure or out of a desire to share their professional knowledge, individuals who wish to publish must consider carefully the size and nature of

the audience that will receive their message. The journals that I surveyed differ as much in circulation size as in type of audience. The readership of these journals ranged from as few as 200 to as many as 145,000 at that time.

Faced with such diversity, would-be writers often ask, To which journal should I submit my manuscript?...

Selected statistics from the survey follow. Information by journal can be found in the article.

- 44% of the 49 journals report on research.
- 95% regularly report research findings in some of their articles.
- 30% say at least 90% of their articles report authors' own research.
- 44% of the editors say journals are not refereed.
- 60% publish theme issues. 10% publish ***only*** theme issues.
- The rejection rate ranged from 30% to 98%, the average rate being 72%.
- The average turn-around time for query letters is 12 days.
- The average time for acknowledgement of the arrival of manuscripts is 11 days.
- The average time for a decision to publish is 11 weeks.
- 19% of the editors do not want to receive phone calls or query letters.
- Nearly two-thirds (60%) of the editors require APA (American Psychological Association) style of footnotes.
- 32% require University of Chicago style.
- 91% accept letter-quality print-outs.
- 57% accept manuscripts printed on a dot-matrix printer.

By studying Figure 8-1 and the results of my questionnaire published in *The Kappan*, you can see much disparity among the preferences and requirements of the editors of these journals. You do yourself a favor to learn the requirements of those particular journals to which you wish to submit manuscripts.

Another way to learn about the preferences of journals in your own field is to go to the reference room of the local library and consult reference books like those listed in Chapter 1. Most of these books are quite comprehensive; they give information about several preferences and requirements of their journals.

In Figures 8-1 and 8-2 perhaps you noticed that the editors of some of these journals prefer that writers use letters to inquire about preferences and requirements. Actually, four-fifths of the editors of the journals reported in Figure 8-2 prefer not to receive letters from prospective authors. Before dismissing the query letter as a tool to use to communicate with editors, however, consider what letters can do for you.

The Query Letter

The query letter is a letter written to the editor asking for permission to send your manuscript to the journal; therefore, the query letter is sent before the manuscript is mailed. A query letter differs distinctly from a cover letter, which accompanies the manuscript.

The advantages of the query letter depend on how you design the query letter. Correctly structured, the query letter can do the following:

- Accurately describe the purpose of your article
- Stimulate the editor's interest in your article

- Establish your credibility as someone qualified to write on this topic
- Establish currency
- Show application

To assure that these benefits result from your query letters, follow the ten steps in Figure 8-3 when writing query letters:

FIGURE 8-3

How to Write a Query Letter

1. Address the editor personally, accurately.
2. Use the editor's (not the managing editor's) correct title.
3. Make sure that this is the current editor.
4. Type the exact title of the journal in UPPER CASE letters.
5. Explain your subject.
6. Establish credibility.
7. Establish currency.
8. Show application (tell how the reader can use it).
9. Obligate the editor to respond.
10. Be concise (from 2 or 3 sentences to 1 page; no more).

Most editors have extremely demanding jobs. Like our high school English teachers, the only reason most editors could offer to explain why they work so hard, is their total commitment to their jobs. One editor was so involved in his desire to have people communicate clearly and accurately that when the owners of a nearby laundry misspelled a word on their marquee, he went to the shop to alert them to the error and ask them to correct it. To

many editors, exposed grammatical errors, spelling errors, and punctuation errors are virtually obscene. (This should tell us something about our need to avoid such errors in our query letters!) Because of this commitment to high standards, editors are often accused of being picky, cranky, and idiosyncratic. For instance, they may get angry, and rightfully so, when we address our correspondence to a former editor.

Figure 8-4 is taken from an actual query letter sent to a journal editor. Unfortunately, perhaps in haste, the author did not take the time to locate a current issue of this journal to make certain he was addressing the letter to the current editor. The handwritten comments are the editor's actual reaction to this letter. This editor, like most, is protective of his journal. Can you tell what he concludes from the author's error? To him, such a mistake reflects a total lack of familiarity with this journal. Should this author follow up by sending the manuscript, it will be met with hostility, putting the novice author at a distinct disadvantage.

FIGURE 8-4

Always Address Correspondence to the Current Editor

Hunter Ballew, Editor
Journal
University of North Carolina
School of Education
Peabody Hall
Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514

wrong editor, always get latest issue of journal to get the proper name
Ballew hasn't been editor for 6 years!

Dear Sir:

Last year, a colleague and I conducted an experimental program in a high school setting. Using a speaker telephone system, our students were able to engage in direct

This letter is much too long, and only serves to tell us that the article will be a compilation, as the letter is.

conversation with nationally prominent figures. I have enclosed a list of the individuals who participated in this program.

Briefly, my class wrote to national figures with whom they wished to speak. If a positive response was received, a committee of five students was appointed which scheduled a time for the interview, conducted indepth research, and developed informed questions. This committee was then responsible for conducting the conversation, but the entire class (and on occasion several classes) could hear and participate in the conversation. On the average, the interview lasted eighteen minutes.

The cost of this program was minimal; the technology was readily available from the local telephone company for an installation fee of less than $50 and a monthly rental of $12. Usually, the program participant used his WATS line and placed the call to us, negating the long distance charge. For the sixteen telephone conversations I have listed, the total per pupil expenditure (including the equipment installation and rental) was 19¢.

Obviously, a program of this type has many other exciting possibilities. While our program was designed for a social studies unit, other curricular units could easily adapt the basic idea.

I would like to share this idea with other educators by writing an article for publication. If you feel your...

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

This mistake, though absurd and humorous (to everyone except the editor and the offending author) is actually easy to make and is quite common. Another common and equally damaging error is any error in the journal title. See Figure 8-5.

FIGURE 8-5

Always Get the Name of the Journal Exactly Correct

Editor, The Journal of Contemporary Accounting
Peabody Hall
School of Education
University of North Carolina
Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514

Gentlemen:

I would appreciate receiving a copy of the guidelines for authors to follow if they wish to submit a manuscript for review and possible later publication in The Journal of Contemporary Accounting.

A current area of interest with me is student educational self-evaluation as it relates to self-directed learning. What I hope to submit is a manuscript that will show classroom teachers how they can design and use a student self-evaluation tool with their learners.

Cordially,

Why tell us this if he doesn't ask whether we are interested in it?

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

By looking at Figure 8-5 it is obvious that the editor in this case was greatly offended because the author misused the seemingly insignificant word *the* in the journal's title.

Too often, editors receive dated manuscripts written by individuals who haven't the expertise needed to contribute to the reader's understanding of the topics. The query letter offers you an opportunity to show the editor that your manuscript is current and that you have the expertise to write such a manuscript. Use the query letter to achieve these goals. **Whenever possible, let the editor know that your manuscript will explain how the reader can apply the information found in your article.** Figure 8-6 shows a sample query letter.

FIGURE 8-6

Sample Query Letter

Dr. Thomas J. Buttery, Editor
AMERICAN MIDDLE SCHOOL EDUCATION
Department of Elementary Education
East Carolina University
Greenville, NC 27834

Dear Dr. Buttery:

I would like to share with you a manuscript which will report the results of a study underway at Eastern Kentucky University. The purpose of the study is to identify recent changes in school law that affect middle school administrators. The manuscript will give explicit examples of how the American middle school administrator should adjust school discipline codes to better comply with the new laws.

I shall look forward to hearing whether you are interested in this work. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Kenneth T. Henson, Dean
College of Education

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

Use the ten steps in Figure 8-3 as a guideline to examine the query letter in Figure 8-6. Does this letter adequately explain the subject? Yes, "The purpose is to identify recent changes in school law...." Does it establish credibility? If so, how? Here is where most beginning authors trip. The most common response is that the author's title (such as dean, senior architect, civil engineer, D.M.D., or Ph.D.) establishes credibility for the author. In fact, titles and degrees are very weak evidence that the author is qualified to write the article. That this article "will report the results of a study" is much better assurance that the author is qualified to write the article. Direct experience is also a good source of credibility. For example, an author of an article titled "Baking Christmas Cookies" might begin the query letter by saying, "As the head chef at a major bakery for the past twelve years,..." or an article on "Interstate Auto Repair Rip-offs" might be signed by Robert Grimes, Mechanic.

Which part of this letter establishes that the content in this article is current? One word removes any suspicion that this article might be a two-year-old manuscript that has been rejected twenty times and has now worked its way around to the present journal. The one key word is *underway*.

This letter tells how the reader will be able to apply and use the information found in this article. (It will) "identify changes in school law" and (it will also) "give explicit examples of how the American middle school administrator should adjust school discipline codes to comply better with the new laws." What do you think about the relevance of this topic to the audience, school administrators? With the recent rise in lawsuits aimed at high school administrators, it is likely that this topic would compel even the most confident administrators to give their attention to this article.

The letter ends by asking the editor to respond: "I shall look forward to hearing whether you are interested in this work." Without such a notice, the editor might assume that the manuscript is already in the mail and therefore might not respond to the author's query. With this simple line, the author puts the ball in the editor's court, as if to say, "Now it's your turn." Notice that all of these goals were achieved in only three sentences. Because editors are so busy, and because they receive so many manuscripts, a good guideline to remember and use when writing query letters is **to always limit your letter to one page or less.**

The Cover Letter

Most authors believe it is to their advantage to accompany their manuscripts with a letter to the editor. This letter is called a *cover letter.* **Correctly written, the cover letter can achieve at least three important purposes.**

1. Remind editors of their prior expression of interest in this manuscript.
2. Reacquaint the editor with the title of the manuscript.
3. Reestablish the author's credibility.

The cover letter should be limited to a few sentences. **Its purpose is to "sell" the manuscript, not to repeat it.** Figure 8-7 shows a sample cover letter.

FIGURE 8-7

Sample Cover Letter

Dr. Thomas J. Buttery, Editor
AMERICAN MIDDLE SCHOOL EDUCATION
Department of Elementary Education
East Carolina University
Greenville, NC 27834

Dear Dr. Buttery:

Enclosed please find the manuscript "New Discipline Laws and the Middle School Principal" which you asked to see in your letter of January 3, 1985. Thank you for your interest in our research which has culminated in the writing of this manuscript.

I look forward to hearing your response.

Sincerely yours,

Kenneth T. Henson, Dean
College of Education
enc: "New Discipline Laws and the Middle School Principal."

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

Examine Figure 8-7 to see which parts of this letter achieve the three goals. It reminds the editor of his prior expression of interest, ("which you asked to see in your letter of January 3, 1985"). It reacquaints the editor with

the manuscript by mentioning the manuscript's title. It reestablishes the author's credibility ("our research which culminated in the writing of this manuscript").

Recapping the Major Points

As you prepare to communicate with editors in the future, remember the following:

1. Authors and editors share the same goal, to produce an article that is relevant and helpful to the readers.
2. Several communication channels are available to authors.
3. Many editors prefer not to receive query letters.
4. Correctly designed, the query letter and the cover letter work for the author.
5. Editors are very busy; therefore, all phone calls and letters should be kept short.
6. To work, query letters and cover letter must be correctly written.
7. Authors should never miss an opportunity to establish their credibility with editors tactfully.

Chapter Nine

QUESTIONS BEGINNERS ASK

No man really becomes a fool until he stops asking questions.

— Charles P. Steinmetz

All beginning writers can be put into two categories: those who ask questions and those who want to ask questions, if only they were brave enough to do so. All writers, beginners and experienced writers alike, have questions to ask. **Successful writers are bold**. This does not imply that they are pompous, arrogant, or egotistical. Boldness in successful writers means that they are confident, determined, and persistent. Those who ask questions are likely to grow much faster than those who have questions to ask, but wait, hoping that someone else will ask their questions for them. Here are a few of the questions that beginning writers ask most frequently. (Six other important questions that authors ask —"How do you find the time to write?" "What tools do writers use?" "Should I use query letters?" "When is the best time to write?" "Where is the best place to write?" "How do you identify topics?"— are addressed in other chapters in this book.)

Most Frequently Asked Questions

QUESTION: Why do you write?

All writers have their own reasons for writing. Many successful writers offer two reasons for writing. First, these writers acknowledge that they are compelled to write. Apart from any tangible benefits —and far more impor-

tant —they have a personal need that forces them to write. A psychology professor and practicing psychologist told the following story to impress on his students the importance of an individual's perceptions and the way these perceptions determine the individual's world.

> I walked into the private ward of the hospital to see a patient. Mr. Jones was screaming at the top of his lungs. I asked him what was wrong. He shouted, "They're killing me! They're killing me!" I said, "Mr. Jones, Who's killing you?" "Those little devils on my chest. They're stabbing me with pitchforks. Can't you see them?" I responded, "No, but I can see that they are hurting you."

As workshop participants talk about their reasons for writing, sometimes their reasons sound so bizarre that they are almost unbelievable; then I remember the patient and the pitchforks. To him the devils were real. **People have different reasons for writing, but whatever their reasons, they have a right to these reasons**. Some people write only because their job requires them to publish; these people may never understand how others could ever be compelled from within to write. The fact remains that this compulsion is the major force that motivates many people to write.

Most successful writers also say that they write because they enjoy writing immensely. Given a choice between writing and watching a sit-com or a B-grade movie, they will take writing every time. Perhaps it's a combination of creating something, completing a task, and knowing that someday it will be read by others.

QUESTION: What are the most important suggestions you can make to aspiring writers?

First, write. If you want to become a successful writer, you must become a good writer. The best way to do this is to write. Write often and much. Make mistakes. That's good! Don't worry about it. **Get your ideas on paper. That's what counts. Then edit your work and re-**

write it. Set some goals; then set yourself a schedule. Give your goals some deadlines. Then watch your writing programs move forward.

Second, if for some reason you choose to ignore or forget all that you have read in this book, remember this one thing: **You can succeed as a writer *only* if you think you can.** I have yet to hear anyone say that for years they have really tried to learn how to write well but have failed to reach any of their writing goals, but I do receive many letters saying something like this:

> I can't believe it. Once I finally took that first bold step and learned a few basic techniques, then I learned how easy it really is. I've had an article accepted in that journal that I always wanted to have publish my materials. Not only have I had one article published in it, I've since had others accepted, and it's easy.

QUESTION: Have you a favorite success story?

Yes. My favorite story happened to a friend. It's full of coincidences. In fact, it has all the earmarks of a fisherman's lie; so, it's understandable if you don't believe it.

I walked into a trophy store in a large mall. There on display was a desktop nameplate with the name of an old army buddy, Raz. It is such an unusual name that I decided to check the phone directory and to call to verify my discovery. I found the number and dialed it. For the first time in twenty-five years, I heard my friend's voice. I asked him to have lunch with me at a local club. We set a date. As I drove up to the club, I noticed that my friend who hails from a background that rivals my own for being humble and unknown, stepped out of a new limousine. As we ate, we reminisced about our experiences as enlisted men in Uncle Sam's army. Raz was the outdoors person who actually enjoyed bivouacking and sleeping on the ground, eating K-rations, and roughing it. In school Raz was never considered a star pupil. By his own admission he was lucky to get through freshman English composi-

tion. Although he did well in his major (wildlife), his writing skills were so limited that he had to repeat freshman composition. Twice!

Raz told me that he was sitting at home one day bored because the rain was keeping him inside. To cope with his boredom, he decided to write an article to share some of his personal experiences in the out-of-doors. He modeled his article after those in a leading national wildlife journal. To his utter amazement, the journal accepted his article, and with his letter of acceptance he received a substantial check. This whetted his appetite; so he wrote a second article, then a third, and fourth. In summary, this person who in his own words was lucky ever to pass freshman composition wrote a string of fifteen articles for wildlife magazines, and with the acceptance of the fifteenth article he had never received a rejection!

Equally amazing, Raz began to write books, experiencing the same degree of success. He disclosed that he had just signed a contract for his eleventh book, a cookbook for campers, for which he received an advance of eighty-five thousand dollars. He and his wife had been conducting writing workshops, but even for an enormous fee he could no longer afford to take time from his writing to conduct the workshops. With their writing and workshop earnings, Raz and his wife had purchased their own publishing company and two hunting and fishing lodges. They had recently bought a summer house in Montana and a winter house in Georgia.

Several lessons can be learned from the experiences of this writer. Even with his bleak composition record, he was able to succeed; nevertheless, Raz would be the first to agree that better composition skills would have made his writing much easier. What contributed most to his success? Raz loved the out-of-doors. Since childhood, he had always had a passion for hunting, fishing, and trapping. As he grew older, this passion for killing animals gradually shifted, and he became a conservationist, tak-

ing a job as a wildlife ranger on a national game reserve, a job which he loved from the first moment and grew to love even more.

Raz was fortunate in that he was a modest person who was able to see his weaknesses and admit them to others. He explained that he was astonished by the acceptance of his articles. "I just wrote about what I enjoyed doing. My articles were nonfiction, focusing on my own experiences." **Like Raz, a major key to success for many writers is that they write about a subject that they understand well, and for which they care passionately.**

QUESTION: How do you handle rejections?

As an experienced writer and teacher of writing, I always want to respond to this question with fatherly advice and say something like, I view rejections as evidence of growth. But to the novice, such fatherly advice may sound like "Eat your spinach; it's good for you." Well, it may be, but only if it doesn't cause you to throw up. Similarly, getting rejections may be good for you, but only if they don't cause you to give up.

Perhaps a better response to the question, "How do you handle rejections?" is **"Don't worry; all successful authors get rejections."** Successful authors grow as a result of rejections because they learn from the experience. Some aggressive novices ask the editors for advice. They ask the editors of refereed journals for copies of the reviewers' evaluations of their manuscript. With this feedback in hand, rejections can become painful blessings.

Perhaps the best advice for dealing with rejections is to **study the rejections immediately, make the necessary improvements, and promptly send the manuscript to another publisher**. If no feedback is received, either ask for it, or quickly examine your returned manuscript for editorial marks, make the needed corrections, put the manuscript in an envelope with a self-addressed,

stamped envelope—and send it to another publisher. Remember that sometimes the reasons behind rejections are unrelated to the quality of the manuscript.

There are two reasons for handling rejections hastily. If you leave the rejection on your desk, you will dwell on it—even if only in your subconscious—and it seems to grow. Second, by promptly sending the manuscript out again, you decrease the time between acceptances, and this increases your number of publications. If your manuscript has any value at all, there is likely to be some correlation between your number of acceptances and the time that your manuscript spends in the editors' offices.

After 20 years of writing, I still get rejections, and each one has a little sting. But each rejection brings a smile as I think, "That's okay. I've been rejected before, and I can take pride in knowing that I've been rejected by the very best."

QUESTION: What distinguishes highly successful writers from less successful writers?

I believe that highly successful writers differ from less successful writers in two ways: in their reasons for writing and in their writing habits. Would-be writers often write because they have a strong desire to be published. While this is understandable, it is unlikely to lead to greatness. Highly successful authors have a very different reason for writing; they write because they have something that must be said.

Apart from their degree of commitment to learning the basics of good writing and applying them with diligence, **highly successful writers have several projects going simultaneously**. At any time, highly successful writers have a couple of investigations underway, a couple or more manuscripts partially completed, and several manuscripts being considered by editors. In contrast, the novice writer often uses a linear approach to writing, writing one draft, then correcting and revising

the draft, then polishing it, then sending a query letter, then waiting for a response, then sending the manuscript, and then waiting for months or years for a response. For this type of writer, the highest success rate possible is one or two acceptances a year. For sure, you can do better.

QUESTION: How about multiple submissions?

Simultaneously sending article manuscripts to multiple publishers is nothing short of Russian roulette. The desperate writer who plays this game never considers the possible adverse consequences. Put simply, multiple submissions can produce multiple acceptances. Then, the writer must decide which journal to reject. Editors don't like rejections any more than writers like them —perhaps even less, for editors invest not only their own time but also their reviewers' time in evaluating manuscripts. Editors also plan issues so that manuscripts complement each other. When one of these manuscripts is abruptly withdrawn, a unique piece of the jigsaw puzzle is missing. Because most journals operate on a tight schedule, and may operate behind schedule, there simply isn't time to relocate a satisfactory replacement for a withdrawn manuscript. The author who refuses to let a publisher print an accepted manuscript should be prepared to have this door of opportunity closed in the future, and no serious writer can afford to shut out any possible markets for a manuscript. To allow two publishers to publish the same manuscript would be worse than professional suicide. The bottom line for writers is **don't make simultaneous submissions to journals.**

This advice applies to journal manuscripts only. For books, multiple submissions are acceptable, and they are even recommended but only when used according to the process described in Chapter Seven.

QUESTION: How about coauthors?

"Should I collaborate with others or should I write alone?" If you find the right partner, there can be several

advantages to collaborating. **The most important quality to seek in a partnership is similar personality.** For example, if you have a "type-A" personality and feel compelled to get your work done on time, you should never work with a "type-B" lackadaisical person who thinks a deadline is an indication that it's time to start working on the job. Such a mixed arrangement is probably equally bad for the "type-B" personality who wants to relax and enjoy the act of writing but is stuck with a partner who is always in a hurry and forever worrying over deadlines and other writing responsibilities.

When personalities match, collaborating can bring out the best in all. Each partner stimulates the other. The unique expertise of each writer complements that of the others. For academicians who are required to publish, collaborating can accelerate the publication rate of all partners. But, even under the best of circumstances, all writers should go solo part of the time; otherwise, they become vulnerable to criticism from less productive colleagues who accuse them of letting others write for them. A few articles of your own can nullify this criticism.

Should you decide to collaborate, you will need to produce a product that is consistent and coherent. A good method to achieve these goals is to have each collaborator edit the entire manuscript. Each edit will remove some incoherence and inconsistency.

QUESTION: Should I use tables and graphs?

Only under the following conditions should you use tables or graphs: If most articles in a copy of the journal use these aids, you should use them too, but only if they clarify your manuscript. **If the journal to which you are submitting your manuscript does not use tables or graphs, then you shouldn't use them.** A good general rule is never to use tables or graphs so long as words can do the job equally well. An equally good rule, however, is that one picture is worth a thousand words.

QUESTION: Should I write articles, short stories, or books?

Article writing is excellent preparation for writing nonfiction books, and writing short stories is good preparation for writing fiction books. Article writing provides the opportunity to develop important writing skills. For those who wish to strengthen their ability to get a new job and **for those who need to fill their vita to earn merit pay, promotion, or tenure, article writing is usually a far better investment of their time than book writing.**

QUESTION: What advantages are there to writing book reviews?

Writing book reviews gives beginning writers an opportunity to analyze writing qualities closely. A further advantage in becoming involved with book reviews is that they help address the "I'm nobody" feeling that beginning writers often harbor. **Writing book reviews is an excellent entrée into writing articles and books.**

Most book publishers receive several times as many book manuscripts and prospectuses as they can use. Similarly, journal editors receive many more review copies of books from authors than they can find reviewers to review. By writing book reviews, you can polish your writing skills, keep abreast of the developments in your field, fill in blank spaces on your vita, get your name in front of your colleagues in the profession, and introduce yourself to the editors. Writing book reviews provides all of this plus a free copy of each book you review.

QUESTION: What is a refereed journal?

At institutions of higher education, no term is more common than "*refereed* journal". The extent of its use is exceeded, however, only by the degree to which it is misunderstood. Although to everyone the word *refereed* reflects scholarship, when cornered, even among those who so readily use the term, few could accurately define it.

Although the academic world disagrees on the many definitions of "refereed journal", most academicians would readily agree that journal refereeing has three common characteristics: *where*, *how*, and *by whom* the refereeing occurs.

As shown in Figure 9-1, there are varying degrees of refereeing.

FIGURE 9-1

Refereeing Occurs in Degrees

	Criteria
Third Degree meets all three criteria	Is refereed by experts throughout the country. Editor provides a rating instrument. Referee process is conducted anonymously.
Second Degree meets two of the three criteria	Is refereed by experts throughout the country. Editor provides a rating instrument. Referee process is conducted anonymously.
First Degree meets only one of the criteria	Is refereed by experts throughout the country. Editor provides a rating instrument. Referee process is conducted anonymously.

Generally, the referees of refereed journals are considered to be peers in the profession. At one extreme, the referees are carefully chosen colleagues who are known and recognized throughout their field for their particular expertise. Some journal editors who claim refereed status for their journals would argue that they themselves are qualified referees.

Another criterion of refereeing is the location. Some people think that all refereed processes must be nationwide; others consider the location of little consequence. Many professional journals are published on large university campuses. Some of the editors of these journals send each manuscript to a colleague in the appropriate department on

their campus. Others would argue that the refereeing can and does occur in the editor's office.

Perhaps a more important criterion than either *who* evaluates the manuscripts or *where* the manuscripts are reviewed is *how* the manuscripts are evaluated. The most loosely conducted evaluations consist merely of the reviewers' subjective opinions. Some evaluators use rating scales to make their judgments. **The most rigid evaluators provide evaluation instruments to referees across the country, and they conduct the reviews anonymously.**

QUESTION: How about vanity publishers?

Vanity publishers are publishers who require their authors to pay all or part of the publishing costs. Sometimes this type of publisher may be a good choice; usually it is not. Suppose you have something that you want to say in a book, and suppose you have tried several commercial publishers, but all of these publishers have declined to publish your work. One alternative is to turn to a vanity publisher.

Under most circumstances, a vanity publisher would be a poor choice. For example, suppose your main motive for having a book published is to accrue academic prestige or academic rewards. **Most academic institutions place far less value on works that are published by vanity presses.** Some colleges refuse even to recognize vanity publications. The reason for this is self-evident: Unlike other publishers, vanity publishers seldom send the manuscript off to be evaluated anonymously by experts, and, for a fee, they'll publish almost anything.

Another reason to avoid vanity publishers is their small size. If your goal is to produce a very successful book, one that is recognized as a leading textbook or a leading professional book, many vanity publishers do not have the marketing capabilities needed to make your book competitive with those published by other publish-

ers. In fact, most vanity presses provide very little or no marketing for their authors' books.

QUESTION: How about self-publishing?

Self-publishing happens when authors decide to take on the responsibility of both the author and the publisher. Like vanity publishing, the self-published author must bear the expenses. Therefore, **like vanity publishing, self-published works seldom prove to be a route to professional recognition, fortune, or fame.**

The self-published author is always subject to suspicion. This suspicion may or may not be warranted. For example, suppose Professor Jones writes a book and later discovers that she cannot find a recognized publisher who is willing to publish it. Many colleagues will conclude that this is because the book is shallow or that it is full of errors. This could be true, but there are other reasons for rejections. For example, the decision to reject a book proposal is often based solely on the publisher's perception of the market size. Sometimes the publisher knows that the market for the book is so small that even if the book were bought and used by *everyone* in this specialized field, the sales of the book would not be large enough to make it profitable to the publisher. This introduces my second favorite story.

In the late 1960s, two professors at a midwestern university developed a prospectus for a book aimed at a new market. They contacted several publishers and were consistently told that such a market did not exist. Convinced otherwise, these authors went to a local press, planned and designed a layout, and paid to have 2,000 copies of their new book printed. Using a small mailer which they also designed and paid a printer to produce, they quickly sold the 2,000 copies and immediately printed a second 2,000 copies. The success of the book prompted the authors to write and self-publish a second edition. The second edition was more successful than the

first. As you might guess, the second edition led to a third edition. The book is now in its fifth edition and its sales have exceeded forty thousand copies, all mailed directly from the home of one of the authors. Obviously, these authors are pleased with their decision to self-publish. Such success stories make self-publishing attractive, and yet self-publishing entrepreneurship may be more an effect of the authors' own capabilities and commitment than of the merits of the self-publishing process itself.

The odds against a self-published book reaching this level of success are gigantic, though there are always a few Davids with slingshots who are willing to take on the giants. If you have a book inside you that must come out at any expense, self-publishing may be a viable last option for you to consider.

QUESTION: If asked, should I pay a journal for publishing expenses?

For decades, journals in some disciplines, particularly some of the sciences, have required their contributing authors to pay for certain publishing expenses such as the costs of graphs, charts, and page proofs. In recent years, additional disciplines (such as education) have begun charging these costs to their contributors. Because professional journals usually do not sell advertisements, charging expenses to contributors may be considered acceptable. As an incentive to get their faculties to publish, many colleges and departments pay for part or all of these expenses.

Some journals charge their contributors a reading fee. Many professionals find this practice highly unacceptable, viewing it as an unprofessional practice, a contrivance to make money.

QUESTION: Should I be a specialist or a generalist?

As many aspiring authors think about their future as writers, they are uncertain whether they will profit more from becoming a specialist or generalist. This decision is

tough. It depends on the author's writing goals. **If your purpose is recognition in a particular field, the nature of the subject may restrict you to publishing in only one or two specific journals. If your field of expertise does not restrict your publishing so severely, there may be much benefit in your writing for a wide array of journals.** The wider the range of your topics and audiences, the greater the number of outlets you will have for your manuscripts. Writing for a wide range of journals also enables you both to reach more varied audiences and to indulge in more than one kind of writing. You may have knowledge that can benefit groups outside your own academic major; because they do not read your professional journals, the only way to reach them is through publishing in their journals.

Still another benefit from being a generalist is the opportunity that it gives you to learn about the knowledge bases of other fields. This is important since you can enrich your own knowledge base by studying several fields. For example, all administrators need to understand principles of leadership, and all fields have studies that contribute significantly to the understanding of leadership theory. Those who write for publication on this topic should at least review the leadership literature in other disciplines.

QUESTION: How about colloquialisms?

Colloquialisms offer the skilled fiction author a way to write authentic descriptions of their characters and dialogue that rings true. For nonfiction authors, colloquialisms are like "inside" jokes. They invite miscommunications, leaving the outsider feeling estranged. **A good rule for nonfiction writers is to avoid using colloquialisms.**

QUESTION: Should I use clichés?

Clichés seldom offer anything that brings quality to a manuscript. They are popular because they are conven-

ient. Frequently, authors use clichés as substitutes when they cannot find the appropriate words to express their ideas. Because of their overuse, clichés make for boring reading and are evidence of a boring writer. **Clichés identify you as a weak writer.**

QUESTION: Do I need to attend a writers' workshop, and how can I find one?

A good workshop can reinforce all of the suggestions made in this book. Among other writers, you can clarify any questions you have about improving your writing program. Equally important, a workshop can put you in touch with fellow writers from whom you can get motivation, encouragement, and practical ideas.

To make the workshop work for you, take along either a manuscript, part of a manuscript, or an idea for an article or book. Also take along some specific questions. You want to leave the workshop knowing exactly what you must do to complete this manuscript.

If you work at a college, your vice president for academic affairs, dean, or chair may have a budget for faculty development. If not, your local Phi Delta Kappa chapter may be willing to arrange a workshop. Since several workshops are offered annually, you may wish to contact the author to learn whether a workshop is already planned for your geographic area.

QUESTION: Is breaking the rules ever acceptable?

In my opinion there are times when breaking the rules is both acceptable and advisable. It depends on the rule to be broken and your reason for breaking it. I would be hard-pressed to think of an occasion where I would recommend using double negatives or disagreement of subject and verb. I abhor obfuscation, yet in this book I have occasionally used the word "prioritize" instead of "rank." Sometimes I think it is okay to begin a sentence with a conjunction. I also think there are times when writing in first person is acceptable.

Generally, writers should choose the most acceptable words, but sometimes the more acceptable words just don't do the job, so I choose a less pretty word, such as "chunk" instead of "cluster." Generally, writers should not make up new words, except when no adequate word exists. I am currently writing a book titled *"Synergetics."* That's my own neologism. It is a new concept for which there was no word. I take literary license on the basis that this is how our national and international vocabularies grow. In my twenty years of writing, this is the first word that I have coined. I plan to take this liberty again in 2010.

Although sometimes I choose to break a rule, I never do so lightly. The rules that we call laws give our lives order. Without them we would have chaos. Likewise, without rules of grammar, our writing would become chaotic and lose its meaning. The rules of grammar are agreed-upon conventions that, when followed, keep communication clear. We write to be read, and that means we must write so as to be understood.

Recapping the Major Points

Most questions that plague writers are perennial. For years these questions have baffled and impeded the success of writers, and they will continue to present problems for writers. The answers to some of the common questions that challenge writers include the following:

1. Most successful writers immensely enjoy writing; they are compelled to write by a need to say something that they feel must be said.
2. To become a successful writer, you must believe in your abilities, and you must write often.

3. The best way to handle rejections is to repair the rejected manuscript and immediately send it to another publisher.
4. Highly successful writers have two or three manuscripts underway while two or three others are being considered.
5. Authors should never simultaneously submit an article manuscript to multiple journals.
6. Collaborating on writing projects with colleagues can provide needed motivation and opportunities to learn from your peers, while expediting your writing program. Collaborative success depends on finding partners with similar personalities and work habits.
7. Tables and graphs should be used only when the journals to which you submit manuscripts use them and only when they communicate the message clearer than written comments.
8. For the beginner, the best investment of writing time is usually spent on writing for national journals.
9. There are several definitions of refereed journals. To make your writing program pay off, learn how your institution defines "refereed," and act accordingly.
10. Vanity publishing is seldom a good choice for authors. Self-publishing is usually a better choice if you can afford it, but self-publishing is a risky business in which only a small percent succeed.

Chapter Ten

GETTING BOOK CONTRACTS

For most people, the work of getting a contract for a book has always been a chore; it's getting harder. Before the economic recession of the 70s, many editors couldn't seem to find enough authors. Although in some fields editors still vigorously pursue authors to write particular nonfiction books, such as college textbooks, an aspiring textbook author had better not wait for an editor's knock on the door. The economics of publishing has made acquisitions editors cautious. If you have an idea for a book, carefully plan your strategy to pursue the publishers, rather than hoping that they will pursue you. Writing a book is enormously time-consuming, and success is not guaranteed. If you still are determined to write a book, congratulations! You can do it. Take the time needed to do it right.

Choosing the Right Book to Write

Occasionally, when people decide to write a book, they go no further than making the resolution itself. Others write complete manuscripts but never succeed in getting them published. Some of the major obstacles include procrastination, striving for perfection, and ignorance about the roles of authors, editors, and agents.

If you are a world-champion procrastinator, then you probably won't rush blindly into the book-writing business without first reading this chapter. If you are not fatally stricken with procrastinator's disease, this is the time for

you to give yourself a kick in the pants and start writing. One editor said that successful writing is the ability to apply the seat of the pants to the seat of the chair. An author cautioned those who sit and wait for the muse to strike by estimating that successful writing is 10 percent inspiration and 90 percent perspiration.

Before putting pen to paper or fingers to keyboard, take a moment to reflect on the type of book you wish to write. Is it fiction or nonfiction? Is it a "how-to" book or a self-help book? Is its major function to inform or entertain? Is it a professional book or a textbook? If it's a textbook, for what grade-level is it written, K-12 or college? Generally, the larger the general market for a book, the harder the writer has to work to out-compete the hordes of people who want to cash in on the bounty.

Developing a Prospectus

Having decided to write a book, the next decision that confronts you is whether to write the book first and then seek a publisher, or to begin by seeking a publisher. **Writing a book requires an enormous investment of time and energy.** To avoid the risk of having the investment result in an unpublishable manuscript, a plausible alternative is to develop a prospectus. Because it also saves time for the editors, most publishers require a prospectus. A good prospectus contains the following parts:

1. Table of contents
2. Sample chapters
3. Book description
4. Market description
5. Competition description
6. Author description

Chapter Outlines

Moving from the would-be-book-writer category to become a published author begins with getting an overall mental picture of the book you want to write. First, begin by making a list of the chapters you plan to include. Then fill in each chapter, identifying the major parts of each chapter listed. Fiction writers may not be able to be so thorough with their chapter outlines because the book has to unfold as it is being written. Nonfiction books such as *how-to* books and *self-help* books often have tables of contents instead of chapters because these books vary in the degree of detail and structure. Consider the examples in Figure 10-1 and 10-2.

FIGURE 10-1

Sample Chapter Outline for a* How-to *Book

Contents

Foreword 1
Introduction 9
1. How Fares the English Language? 13
2. Faith, Hope, and Clarity 29
3. Beyond the Toothpaste Tube 41
4. The Things We Ought Not to Do 57
5. The Things We Ought to Be Doing 97
6. The Tools We Live By 141
7. My Crotchets and Your Crotchets 151
8. The Games We Play 231

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Figure 10-1 shows the contents page in the book, *The Writer's Art,* by James J. Kilpatrick. Notice that some of these titles give clues about the contents. We might suppose that Chapter One will offer some analysis and criti-

cism of the English language and that Chapter Two will emphasize the need for clarity in writing, but only the author knows what Chapter Three is about. Most of these titles, because they just sort of make the reader feel good, are inviting and functional.

Compare Kilpatrick's contents section to the Table of Contents in Dale Baughman's *Baughman's Handbook of Humor* in Figure 10-2.

FIGURE 10-2

More Detailed Contents Outline for a "How-to" Book

The Practical Value of Humor in Education 7

SECTION 1: Types of Humor and Application in Education 17

The pun • The limerick • Comic verse • The gag • The joke • The anecdote • Rustic humor • One-liners • Riddles • Boners • The tongue twister • Publication bloopers • Fun with words • Report-card-day shock • Seasonal and holiday humor • Communications humor • Teacher dilemmas • Adolescent dilemmas • Kindergarten kapers • Student masterpieces • Examination humor • The double blunder • Parent perplexities • PTA humor • The fable • Satire • Plain nonsense

SECTION 2: How, When and Where to Use Humor in Education 49

The Nature of Humor 52

The Functions of Humor 55

Social lubricant • Safety valve • Therapy • Tonic • Sixth sense • Survival kit • Motivation and cognitive challenge

The Phenomenon of Laughter 59

Humor and the Child 62
Laughter and Learning 68
Laughing at One's Self 70
Joy in the Schools 71
Sources of Humor 75
The Many Ways to Use Humor in Education . . . 80
Diagnosis • Humanizing • Democratic living • Variety and unpredictability • Tension reducer • Openers • Preoccupied minds • To make a point • Holidays and vacations • The mischief of language
References 89

SECTION 3: Selections of Education Humor 91

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

As seen in Figure 10-2, even though the contents section for nonfiction *how-to* and *self-help* books can be detailed and descriptive, each entry is succinct and to the point. Robert Hochheiser entertains while informing the reader with the Table of Contents in *How to Work for a Jerk* (See Figure 10-3).

FIGURE 10-3

Contents Section in* Self-help *and* How-to *Books that Both Entertain and Inform

CONTENTS

1. THEY DO IT ON PURPOSE 1
Why bosses act like jerks, and how they get away with it.
2. THE CAST OF CHARACTERS 11
Identifying the type of boss you have and determining how to deal with him.

3. DILETTANTES, FOPS, EXPERTS, AND OTHER MEATHEADS 38

Assorted losers do reach the top. Here's how to get the upper hand with them.

4. CORPORATE DINOSAURS 62

Entrepreneurs as they evolve from fearless to fearful.

5. INHUMAN RESOURCEFULNESS 95

How jerks get hired. The schemes bosses use to avoid rewarding us. Counterattacking those schemes.

6. POLITICS 120

An assortment of unprincipled principles for dealing with uncooperative bosses, colleagues, and subordinates.

7. IF YOU'RE ALSO A BOSS 162

Motivating your people to work for you, not against you. Mutual indispensability and how it works. The importance of compatibility. How to hire good people.

8. IT'S ONLY A JOB 204

Putting your job in perspective as a means to an end. Controlling your ego. Dealing with egocentric bosses. Creative selfishness. When and how to be assertive. Setting goals. What to do when nothing works.

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

Other types of nonfiction books such as textbooks or professional books have formal chapters. These books demand a more detailed chapter outline. Figure 10-4 shows one chapter outline from each of two college textbooks.

FIGURE 10-4

Professional Books and Textbooks Require Detailed Chapter Outlines.

From Armstrong, Henson, and Savage, *Education: An Introduction*, 3rd ed. Macmillan, 1989.

Chapter 7: Effective Schools

- Objectives
- Pretest
- Introduction
- Defining Effective Schools
- School Climate
- Positive Discipline and Control
- The Role of the School Principal
- Providing for Staff Development
- Monitoring of Clearly Established Goals & Objectives
- The Importance of Autonomy
- Parent Involvement
- Recapitulation of Major Ideas
- Summary
- References

❖ ❖ ❖

From Thompson and Strickland, *Strategic Management: Concepts and Cases*. Business Publications, 1987, 4th ed.

Chapter 1: Strategic Management: What It Is, Whose Responsibility It Is, and Why It Matters

- What Is Strategic Management? 2
- The Components of Strategic Management 4
- The Process of Strategic Management 14
  - Who are the Strategy Managers? 14
  - Why Strategic Management Matters 16

Definition of Terms 18
Suggested Readings 19

Illustration Capsules

1. Examples of How Companies Define their Business . 6
2. The Strategic Performance Objectives at Standard Oil of Indiana (Amoco) 8
3. Strategy at Beatrice Companies: From a Local Dairy to a Diversified Corporate Giant 10

When you consider that the education textbook has 20 chapters and 510 pages, and the business textbook has ten chapters and 1,054 pages, the need for detailed chapter outlines becomes obvious. **Detailed chapter outlines help writers conceptualize and organize the vast amount of content in these books so that the enormous quantity of information in them can be comprehensible to their readers.**

If your book is to be fiction, most likely you will want to write and submit the first two chapters. The decision isn't so simple for authors of nonfiction books. Because the first chapter lays a foundation for the following chapters, and because many publishers specifically ask to see the first chapter, you should **begin by writing Chapter One.** Then peruse your outline of contents **and choose another chapter or two which you think will be the best of all.** When you have written and polished Chapter One and the additional one or two favorite chapters, send these with your prospectus to the publishers for consideration.

Book Description

You must describe your book clearly and succinctly. For example, "This is a general secondary and middle school methods textbook for undergraduate classes." Then sketch its major features. I used the following paragraph to "sell" the strengths of a book that is now in its third edition, *Methods and Strategies for Teaching in Secondary and Middle Schools:* "It is comprehensive (it has all of those chapters commonly found in secondary and middle school methods texts). It is timely (it has some new chapters that are not commonly found in methods texts). For example, it contains a chapter on educational reform, a chapter on educational technology, an annotated bibliography on simulations and games (complete with addresses of sources), and a resource list for teaching thinking skills." Since evaluation has become a topic of great reform interest, the prospectus for the next revision of this book will announce that the next edition will contain separate chapters on evaluation and testing.

Since I thoroughly update all the chapters and cite the latest research studies, with each revision of this book, I am careful to say so. For example: "This book reports the findings of over 300 research studies." If your book is a textbook, pay close attention to pedagogy, and stress this strength in your prospectus. For example, In the *Methods and Strategies* book prospectus, I say: "Each chapter has a list of *objectives*, a *pre-test*, a *post-test*, a *recap of major ideas, suggested further activities*, and *suggested further readings*. Throughout each chapter, *Let's Ponder* sections cause the reader to interact with the dialogue. An *Experiences* (or *Case Study*) section at the end of each chapter shows the major principles being applied."

To determine the expenses or capital needed to publish a book, the acquisitions editor will need some information about the book's physical characteristics. For example: "The book length will be approxi-

mately 450 pages (or 750 manuscript pages). The book will contain about 25 photos and approximately 25 line drawings. Present plans include a teacher's manual of approximately 64 book pages. Present plans do not include supplementary aids for students."

Market Description

Of paramount interest to the editor is the market for which your work is intended. This market must be large enough to support the project, and it must be attainable, which means that it must be specific. Although authors may be tempted to think of their work as having application to many markets, editors know that few works are read by many audiences. An old adage expresses the dilemma: **"The only thing that is wrong with a book that is written for everybody is that it is used by nobody."** In addition to being specific, the market description should provide examples of specific contexts in which the book might be required. For a college textbook prospectus, examples of particular university courses in which the book would be used should be provided. Most university libraries have college catalogs; it takes only a few minutes to look up the relevant courses and jot down their name, number, and description.

Description of the Competition

The worst mistake a military commander can make, they say, is to underestimate the power of the enemy. Equally so, authors who fail to know and acknowledge the competition assure their own defeat. Since you are writing a textbook, and since this book is in your field of study, you will have expertise on the subject, and you will be aware of some of the competition. You may, nevertheless, fall short unless you are aware of all of the competing

texts. Furthermore, you must be more than aware of these books; **you must be closely familiar with each competing book**. You must then use their strengths and weaknesses to improve the design of your product.

All editors want assurance that your book will contain those chapters that professors who teach the course expect to cover. Also, **they want your book to be superior to, not as good as, but *superior to* the competition**. Two items are needed to communicate these features. First, you need to submit a very detailed and very comprehensive chapter outline, detailed enough to contain all of the major topics in each chapter. Second, in a content comparison chart, you can clearly separate your book from the masses. See Figure 10-5.

By examining Figure 10-5, the editor can readily identify those chapter topics that are common among the major textbooks used in the course. Your book is in column H. About two-thirds down the chart are those chapters that you chose to delete in this text in favor of other chapters, (which are listed in the bottom section of the Figure). The content comparison chart can help *you* design a superior book by helping you identify the chapter topics that you must cover, by helping you identify important and relevant topics for new chapters, and by helping you communicate these coverages to your editors.

The first group contains topics (through "Communications") that are common to most books, and, therefore, must be included. Professors who teach the course won't adopt a text that doesn't include these.

The second group contains topics ("Professional Teacher" and "Student Teacher") that belong in other courses. You will exclude them to make room for innovative chapters.

The last group (beginning with "Educational Reform") consists of chapters that make your book **unique** and **superior** to the competition.

FIGURE 10-5

Content Comparison

Chapter Topics	Book A	Book B	Book C	Book D	Book E	Book F	Book G	Book H
Adolescence & Learning	X	X	X	X	X			X
Planning	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Classroom Management	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Evaluation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Teaching Styles	X	X	X	X	X			X
Motivation	X	X						X
Multicultures or Disadvantaged		X		X	X			X
History & Aims		X						X
Audio-Visuals		X		X				X
Teaching Special Pupils		X	X					X
Communications			X					X
The Professional Teacher / Getting a Job		X	X					
Student Teaching		X	X					
Educational Reform								X
Effective Teaching								X
Using Technology								X

Author Description

Finally, **include a brief statement that clearly establishes your competence in writing this work.** If it is emerging from your own research, say so. If you have had unique experiences that contribute to the quality of

this work, the editor should know this. Also include a statement about your previous, relevant publications.

On the other hand, and contrary to popular belief, an author's degrees and titles are of little importance unless they assure that the author has the expertise needed to write a superior book. For example, the title "department chairperson" is significant only if you are writing a book on leadership or administration. Much more convincing would be the author's experience in conducting research, surveys, or other investigations on the subject of this book.

Selecting a Publisher

Once the prospectus is complete, it is time to approach a publisher. You will want to **choose only publishers that publish books in your subject area**. For example, if you send your textbook prospectus to a publisher that does not publish textbooks in your field, you have wasted valuable time. This can be avoided by checking your own professional materials to see who published them, or better yet by making a trip to the library. At the library, check the current reference book *Books in Print.* In the "Subjects" volume of *Books in Print,* you will see listed all of the books according to particular subjects. Make a list of the publishers of these books. Then check the current *Literary Market Place* and the current *Writer's Market* for a detailed description of each book. You may wish to develop a chart such as the one in Figure 10-6.

Figure 10-6 was designed to help me identify the best possible publishers for this book that you are reading. A column heading was included for the collecting of each type of information that I believed to be important for this type of book and for the purposes I was seeking to accomplish by writing this book.

Royalty Rate: How much money you're going to make is always important to all authors.

Titles: The number of titles that a publisher publishes per year gives you a feel for the size of the company.

Size of each printing: Large printings give some assurance that the publisher will work hard to market the book to avoid being stuck with unsold copies.

Hardcover/paperback: Sometimes the number of charts in a book makes a hardcover book preferable, but if the company also publishes paperbacks, this may mean that instead of having a short life, the book is reprinted at a later date and sold in mass at a lower price.

Advance: A large non-returnable advance can help assure the author that the publisher will not back out on the agreement, and can assure that the publisher will work hard to sell enough copies to cover the advance.

Report time: Helps the author track multiple submissions of the manuscript.

Publishing time is important if the author needs the book for merit pay, promotion, or especially tenure.

The next two columns — ***How-to*** and ***Self-help*** — are important to this book because it falls under these categories. The final column is left open to write in any features peculiar to a publisher which are important to the author. I also use this space to record the date that I sent material to the publisher, and the date I received a rejection. ("4/1/89 — Rejected — 4/15/89").

FIGURE 10-6

Publishers Chart

PUBLISHER	Royalty	Titles/ Year	Printing	Hard/ Paper	Advance
Andrew, McMeel and Parker	R	30		H, P	
Arbor House	S	55		H, P	
Avon		300		P	Y
Donning	7-15%	38		H, P	2,000
Berkley	6-10%	900		P	Y
Little, Brown		100		H, P	Y
P-H	10-15%	150		H, P	3-5K
WW Norton		213			Y
Prima	15-20%	30+		H, P	Y
Ten Speed Press		40	5,000 10,000	P	Y
Ashley	10-15%	30		H, P	1,000
Menasha Ridge	10%W	13	4,000	H, P	Y
Jeremy Tarcher		30		H, P	Y
Wadsworth	5-15%	600		H, P	
Writer's Digest	10%	45			
Dodd, Meade	10-15%	200			Y
Crown		250		H, P	
Random House		120			
Ballantine	8-10%	20		H, P	
Contemporary	6-15%	100		H, P	
Fearon Education		110			
Fucal Press	10-17%	45		H, P	1,500
Stephen Green		30		H, P	
Metamorphous	10%+	10	2,000 5,000	H, P	N
PAR, Inc.	5-10%	8		H, P	

FIGURE 10-6

Publishers Chart (continued)

Report Time	Pub Time	How-to	Self-Help	Other Important Features
		X		4-1-89 Rejected 4-15-89
	9 mos	X	X	
2 mos		X	X	
2 mos	1 yr	X	X	
	18 mos	X		
3 mos		X		4-5-89 Rejected 4-15-89
3 wks	8 mos	X	X	4-1-89
	1 yr			4-5-89
1 mo	6-9 mos	X	X	
1 mo	10 mos	X	X	
2 mos	20 mos	X		
1 mo	8 mos			
6 wks	1 yr	X	X	
2 wks	1 yr			Speech & Communications
	1 yr			4-1-89
6 wks	9 mos			
2 mos		X	X	4-5-89
3-6 wks				
6 wks	1 yr	X	X	4-5-89
	10 mos	X	X	
1 mo				
3 mos	1 yr	X		Communications
3 mos		X	X	College of Ed. graduates
	8 mos	X	X	Query letter sent
1 mo	1 yr			Developing Writing Skills / Community College

Send Query Letters

After you have identified several good prospective publishers, select five or six of the most likely ones and simultaneously **send all of these publishers a query letter in which you merely ask whether they are interested in seeing a prospectus for a book of this type**. Give them a brief description of your project, but no more than one page. Be up-front, letting each editor know that you are contacting other editors. This will avoid the possible embarrassment of having more than one editor accept your work, and then having to turn down the lesser offers. It will also encourage editors to respond to your letter without unnecessary delay. When writing your query letters you may find it helpful to refer to the explicit suggestions given in Chapter Six.

FIGURE 10-7

Sample Query Letter

Mr. Ray O'Connell, Editor
Longman, Inc.
The Longman Building
95 Church Street
White Plains, New York 10601
Dear Mr. O'Connell:

Would you be interested in reviewing a prospectus for an undergraduate secondary and middle school methods text? This book will have those chapters commonly found in methods texts.

You might want to list those essential chapters that are found in existing texts.

As a former junior high school teacher, I find that other chapters are needed which are not found in current texts. This book will fill that gap. Three of the chapters that are unique to this book are "Using Microcomputers," "School Reform," and "Effective Teaching Research."

This answers that paramount question that editors always ask: "How is your book superior to the existing texts?"

Since I am contacting other publishers, I hope that you will respond at your earliest convenience and that you will specify if you require additional information beyond the chapter outline, the prospectus, and two sample chapters. Thank you.

This tactfully tells the editors that they can't put you on the back burner.

Sincerely yours,
Kenneth T. Henson, Dean
College of Education

Query Letters

Figure 10-8

Query Letters Can Be Too Brief

1293 Holly Hill Drive
Northwood Lake
Miami, Florida 33721

May 5, 1991

Juanita Leles, Editor
Business Division Books
National Book Company
1515 States Avenue
New York, NY 20215

Dear Ms. Leles:

I would like to submit for your consideration a manuscript titled The Contemporary Supervisor. Unlike other books written for supervisors, this book analyzes recent changes in our society and shows how the supervisor can adjust to accommodate each change.

I hope you will welcome the opportunity to see a prospectus and a couple of chapters of this manuscript. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Michael Lee

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

The letter shown in Figure 10-8 gets right to the point and tells the editor what the writer wants to communicate. Unlike most query letters, which are too long, this letter may be a little too brief. The author could have mentioned one or two of the book's strengths. The letter fails to tell the manuscript's approximate length. After reading the letter, the editor might wonder whether the sender expects a response, or is implying that the prospectus is already in the mail.

Correcting for these shortcomings, a revision of this letter is shown in Figure 10-9.

If you are not acquainted with the person to whom you are writing, use the recipient's proper name and your proper name. If you do know the recipient and you always call this person by first name or initials, then use the first name or initials in your letter.

FIGURE 10-9

An Information-Rich Query Letter

1293 Holly Hill Drive
Northwood Lake
Miami, Florida 33721

May 5, 1991

Juanita Leles, Editor
Business Division
Professional Books
National Book Company
1515 States Avenue
New York, NY 20215

Dear Ms. Leles:

Would you be interested in seeing a 500 page manuscript titled The Contemporary Su-

pervisor? Unlike other books written for supervisors, this twelve-chapter book analyzes recent changes in our society and shows how the supervisor can adjust to accommodate for each change. Written in plain language, this practical book will give many examples to show the supervisors how to apply each technique.

Thank you for considering this project. I shall look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Michael Lee

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

The Agent

Having developed a good prospectus, it's time to share it. Shall you go directly to the publishers or do you need a go-between, a professional representative—an agent? The answer depends on you and your book. If your book is a professional guide or a textbook, you probably won't need an agent. In fact, because of the limited potential for many professional books and textbooks, few agents are willing to take on this type of client. If, however, your book is aimed at a very large market, you should familiarize yourself with the roles that a professional agent plays and the disadvantages and advantages of having your own agent.

Many authors prefer not to use an agent for the following reasons: There's a fee to be paid, usually ten to fifteen percent of the royalties, although this may vary

with some agents. Then there's the task of finding an agent who is willing to take on new clients. This is a strong deterrent for beginning authors because most agents require that their new clients have already successfully published similar works or that they have earned a set minimum amount from their royalties during the past year. **A good prospectus can help persuade an agent to accept an inexperienced writer.** Then there is always the possibility of getting tied to an agent who assigns your projects low priority.

Paradoxically, although agents typically take ten to fifteen percent, a good agent may negotiate for you, getting you additional benefits that far outweigh the agent's fee. Most agents are honest business people who intend to earn their pay through providing high-quality service to their writers. Should you decide that your agent's goals and expertise do not match your own, most agents would recognize this and would be willing to negotiate a release of obligation. Most authors agree that the agent who has spent time reading your product, writing letters, and making phone inquires would be due some compensation. This could be settled as a reduced percentage fee for the first edition sales, or the author could offer a straight payoff for the agent's time.

Most textbook writers do not need agents. Often the market is too small to support an agent. If you plan to write a textbook or, indeed, a book of any type, consult the *Writer's Market*, an indispensable, annual, reference book used by experienced and inexperienced writers alike. Each edition of this book contains a thorough book section which lists hundreds of book publishers, the current editors' names, the mailing address, the number of books published last year, a description of the types of books published, sub-categories of fiction or nonfiction books, and instructions to prospective authors. For the price of a self-addressed, stamped envelope (S.A.S.E.) most publish-

ers will send a set of authors' guidelines. Some will even send a complimentary copy of their book catalog. This modest investment in postage is a good deal for any author.

Negotiating the Contract

Once you succeed in getting a publisher to offer you a contract, it is time to negotiate. If this is your first book, don't overplay your hand. My advice is to ask for a fixed percentage of the sales. I recently read in a local newspaper that a friend of mine wrote a book for which he received a flat fee of two hundred dollars. The book has now sold at least thirty-five million copies. It doesn't take a mathematician to figure that my friend made a big mistake.

You can do better. Avoid commercial publishers that offer straight fees. I make exceptions for nonprofit professional associations in which I hold memberships. For example, I received a nominal fee for writing a Phi Delta Kappan "fastback." Phi Delta Kappa offers a standard fee for its fastback authors. Although the fee itself is nominal, many other benefits accrue from getting published by Phi Delta Kappa. For example, a national association offers tremendously large exposure. Association with a prestigious organization boosts an author's reputation. When strangers say, "I know your name. You write for *Phi Delta Kappa,* don't you?" then I know that my investment of time and energy was well spent.

In an article published by *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (see Figure 10-10), I advised authors to ask for an advance, but I warned against feeling disappointed if the publisher refuses to pay in advance. I also said that you should read the contract carefully and look for hidden expenses such as costs of photos and permissions. If the publisher says that their authors always bear these expenses,

then ask for a ceiling to be set on these expenses. Otherwise, you could write a book that is highly profitable to the publisher but one that brings no income at all to you.

FIGURE 10-10

When Signing Book Contracts, Scholars Should Be Sure to Read the Fine Print

The Chronicle of Higher Education October 24, 1990

It's happening everywhere, it's exciting, and it isn't even illegal. But it should be. Authors on campuses everywhere are joyfully signing book contracts with commercial publishers. But by this time next year, the joy of some of these authors will have faded when they realize that they have signed away many of the advantages that caused them to write in the first place.

When I recently received in the mail a contract for a forthcoming textbook, I realized that my reaction was far different than when I first began receiving contracts. A decade and a dozen books ago, I was elated by the arrival of each contract. But now, having been burned several times, I no longer rip open the envelope with passion and delight. Instead, using bomb-squad precaution, I slowly and carefully remove the contents.

Looking back, I'm embarrassed about the bad advice I once gave to novice authors who brought me their contracts for my "expert" opinion. After all, I had published several books, with commercial publishers as well as a university press. "Don't worry," I would say. "This is a reputable publishing company whose century-old reputation depends on its fairness."

Scanning the document without noting the details, I would continue: "Yes. It's the standard contract. No, you don't need an attorney. Just sign it."

I know better now. You should read every word, and you shouldn't assume fairness. But, by watching for a few simple traps, you can get yourself a decent contract.

* ***Don't be afraid to negotiate.*** Most publishers are honest. But commercial publishers have only one means of survival—

making a profit. Their need to make money often leads to losses for authors, intended or not. If you expect to make a profit by writing, you must learn to protect your own interests. Remembering that your relationship with a publisher is a business relationship can help you earn a fairer deal.

* ***Recognize that royalty agreements can be complicated.*** Most beginning writers are obsessed with royalty rates. When new writers hand me their first contracts, they often ask first about the fairness of the royalty rate. Once my advice was: "Take anything. It's a beginning." But now my response has changed. Some basic facts about royalties should be understood.

The royalty rate quoted in contracts is based on net sales receipts. This means that an author's earnings will be based on the money received from sales, *minus* certain publishing expenses. For example, if you sign a contract that pays 15-percent royalty on a book that sells for $29.95, your share is not 15 percent of the $29.95 retail price, or $4.50. Instead, your profit is 15% of the retail price *minus* the bookstore's discount from the publisher (usually 20%), free samples, returns, transportation charges, taxes, and other publishing expenses. So instead of receiving $4.50 for each book sold, you will receive about $3.50.

Bookstores are given even larger discounts on trade books (usually 25 to 30 per cent, sometimes 40 per cent). The royalty rate paid to authors of trade books is usually considerably less than the 15 per cent commonly paid to textbook authors. Most authors of trade books receive royalties of between 5 and 10 per cent. You also can expect a lower royalty rate on books sold outside the United States. Books sold by mail order or through book clubs may earn even less.

* ***Ask for a fixed royalty rate.*** Some contracts specify a fixed percentage of net receipts; other contracts offer a sliding scale. Sliding-scale contracts became popular with commercial publishers during the economic recession of the 1970's, because, I suspect, publishers wanted a hedge against rapid inflation and

other economic constraints. A sliding scale can be advantageous to the author when the book's market is large and the book sells well. But publishing companies assess the potential sales of a given book and design variable scales that favor themselves. I therefore believe that beginning writers are far better off with a fixed rate.

Here's how the sliding scale works. Suppose that instead of offering you a straight 15-per-cent royalty rate, a company offers you a 12-per-cent rate on the first 5,000 copies of your book sold, 15 percent on the next 5,000 copies, and 18 percent on all copies sold in excess of 10,000. When computed on this sliding scale, a $30 book that sold 6,000 copies would earn its author $18,000, compared to $21,600 on a straight 15-per-cent scale, after deducting the retailers' 20-per-cent discount from the publisher.

If you do accept a sliding-scale contract, be aware that there are two basic types. One offers a fixed rate on the first volume of copies sold, a higher fixed rate on the next volume sold, and an even higher fixed rate on the next volume sold. For example, a contract might specify 12 per cent on the first 10,000 copies, 15 per cent on the next 5,000 copies, and 18 per cent on all additional copies. This means that if you sold 10,005 copies you would earn 15 per cent on only 5 copies. Generally, this type of contract extends over the life of the edition. If the book is revised, a new contract must be issued.

The other type of sliding-scale contract provides increases that are contingent on the sale of a specified number of copies within a certain period of time. For example, using the same percentages, the royalty would increase to the higher rates only if 15,000 copies or more were sold within a calendar year. With this type of contract, you should know whether the increase covers all copies sold that year or just those exceeding the specified levels. In other words, using the same example, it is important to know whether a book that sells 11,000 copies in a year earns 15 per cent on all 11,000 copies or earns 12 per

cent on the first 10,000 copies and 15 per cent on the last 1,000 copies. If after examining the contract, you are not sure, you should ask the acquisitions editor for clarification, and include the clarification in the contract.

* ***Ask for a non-refundable advance.*** In book contracts an advance is a stated amount of money given to the author at specified times before his or her work is published. But often the publisher's view of advances differs from the author's. The publisher considers an advance as a loan to authors to help defray research or typing expenses, but many beginning authors consider it just a windfall. Some publishers offer to give advances; others will give advances only at the author's request; and others never pay advances. Don't be afraid to ask for an advance, but don't be discouraged if your request is denied.

In asking for an advance, you should be sure the amount is proportional to the estimated size of the market for your book. For a book with anticipated sales of 5,000 or fewer units, a request for a $1,000 to $2,000 advance is reasonable. A book with anticipated first-year sales of 25,000 copies often commands an advance of $15,000 to $20,000.

One contract item that is well worth checking is whether the author is responsible for returning the advance if the publisher decides to cancel the contract. Commercial publishers can and often do cancel contracts at any point during the publishing process. To guard against this disappointment, you may wish to ask that the advance become a "kill fee" if the publisher decides to cancel. If the publisher agrees to your request, be sure that your contract is altered to include this condition.

* ***Watch for hidden expenses that may be deducted from your royalties.*** An expense often charged entirely to the author is the cost of permissions to quote from other copyrighted works. Although most contracts specify that these costs will be charged to the author, you may wish to ask the publisher to pay. (Don't be disappointed if this request is denied.)

If you have to pay for the permissions, you can reduce these costs by carefully selecting your sources of material. For example, federal-government documents can be quoted without cost. At the other extreme, the use fee for some quotations may be several hundreds of dollars for just a few words.

Some people advise writers that they have no choice but to pay the assessed permission fees. That's not true: You always have a choice. If a requested fee seems exorbitant, try to negotiate. If that fails, seek another source. I once asked Metro-Golden-Meyer for permission to use the last two lines from the song "Somewhere over the Rainbow." I couldn't afford the fee they specified, so I wrote a second letter explaining that my book was a professional book whose total expected sales were very low. The company reduced its original fee by 50 percent. Since I still felt the fee was too high for the type of book I was writing, I chose another quotation—from a book—and was charged no fee at all. (Many book publishers do not charge for permission to use short quotations.)

Another hidden expense in some contracts is the cost of artwork and photographs. In the early 1980's I had a textbook published by a leading publisher. The book was a success in that, although written for a small market, its net receipts for the first year exceeded $20,000. Normally my straight 15-percent royalty would have earned me $3,000. However, because of a misleading phrase in the contract, I received no royalties for this first-year period. In fact, at the end of the first year I owed the company $1,843.15 for use of photos and quotations.

In all fairness, I should admit that I did receive a grant of $350 from the publisher to cover photo costs. The contract included the brief statement, "The publisher agrees to pay the author a grant of up to $350 for manuscript preparation and photo costs upon written request." This was the only mention of photographs in the contract. I had assumed this grant would cover all photo costs. But what I thought was a "gift" cost me dearly. After writing to the editor for copies of the photo-pay-

ment receipts, I was devastated to learn that in addition to the many photographs that I myself had taken for the book, more than 20 additional ones had been purchased. The charges for each photo ranged from $50 to $150. I had had no idea that so many photographs would be used, photos that I would have to pay for. The grant paid for only a fraction of their cost.

You can do better. Ask the publisher to pay for photographs. Publishers often do, but if yours refuses, ask for a ceiling on the costs to be charged to you. Agreeing to pay for photographs without stipulating a maximum is tantamount to handing your publisher a blank check with your signature on it. Don't do it.

My final advice is: Don't let my warnings discourage you. I just signed my 12th book contract this week and, knowing that I heeded my own advice, I am excited about the prospect of having another book published. Book writing is a way to reach professional and personal goals that you could not otherwise reach. So stay alert, watch for pitfalls, and go for it!

Recapping the Major Points

This chapter helps you as you begin searching for a publisher. From reading this chapter you learned the following points:

1. Getting book contracts is highly competitive.
2. A well-prepared prospectus can save you considerable time should publishers consider the target market for your proposed text too small.
3. Each book prospectus should contain information about the book, the market, the competing books, and the author.

4. When submitting a prospectus, the author should include a table of contents, chapter one, and at least one additional chapter.
5. Multiple submissions of a book prospectus is acceptable provided the author notifies each editor that the prospectus is being shared with other publishers.
6. To succeed, your prospectus must convince the publisher that your book will be superior to other books that are already on the market.

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Chapter Eleven

BUSINESS WRITING

The most common writing needs that business people have are letters, memos, and reports. These different types of correspondence have several common qualities. You can improve all three by using the following guidelines. As you write your letters, memos, and reports, remember to do the following:

1. **Avoid making grammatical errors**. Good grammar is always important. To avoid misspelling, keep a dictionary handy. But **do not use your dictionary too often**. If you write with one eye on the dictionary, you are probably using words that will be unfamiliar to your audience. A far better option is to use simple, familiar words.
2. **Communicate clearly**. The main purpose of writing is to communicate. This means that simple is better than complex, short is better than long, and familiar is better than unfamiliar. Just as short words are better than long words, short sentences are better than long sentences, and short paragraphs are better than long paragraphs. This does not mean, however, that you should never use a long word, sentence, or paragraph. If all the sentences are the same length, you may have a boring product. Varying the length of a few sentences can bring stimulation to the reader.
3. **Each piece of correspondence has an intended effect**. Before you write, consider what effect you

want your correspondence to have on the reader; then, write it accordingly.

4. **Avoid using sarcasm**. Sarcasm is often mistaken for fact. When taken literally, sarcasm triggers pain, and neither is an appropriate goal in business.
5. **Remain personal**. Good business communications are written as though the author were speaking to the intended reader. As you write, keep the intended reader in mind.
6. **Avoid using humor**. Written humor is easily misunderstood. Without oral clues (such as laughter) or nonverbal feedback (such as smiles), the reader never knows for sure whether written humor is intentional. If you must choose between being funny or being serious, be serious; few writers can manage to do both without confusing the reader.

Writing Memos

Memos are the most commonly used form of business communications. They are most often used within a company or institution. Their popularity can be attributed to their practicability. Written correctly, memos are quick to write and quick to read. The result is that **when written correctly, memos can communicate messages clearly and quickly**. Since efficiency is an important goal in any business, the memo is an established and familiar part of all businesses.

The memo form usually tells to whom the memo is intended, who is sending the message, the date of the memo, and sometimes the nature of the communication. Following is an example of a well written memo.

FIGURE 11-1

Sample Memo

Memorandum

TO: John Grimes
FROM: Larry Worley
RE: Canceled Meeting
DATE:

Because our department is running behind schedule, the regular Monday morning supervisors meeting has been canceled. All supervisors are to remain on the production line throughout the morning of December 15.
Thank you for your cooperation.

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

Although this memo is brief, it achieves these goals:

- Cancels the meeting
- Explains why the meeting was canceled
- Provides directions
- Asks for cooperation
- Expresses appreciation

Business correspondence that gets to the point without unnecessary delay is often called *bottom-line writing.* Notice that this correspondence is neither stilted nor is it curt or abrupt. The choice of familiar words, the courteous "thank you," and the assumption that the supervisors will cooperate, all work to make this correspondence friendly and personal.

The memo in Figure 11-2 provides information and gives a directive. **When asking for a job to be done, it is best to set a deadline.**

FIGURE 11-2

Memos Should Specify Deadlines

TO: Department Heads
FROM: Sam Higgins, Personnel Manager
RE: Quarterly Report Due Date
DATE: 7-5-91

The second quarter department reports are due in my office by noon on Wednesday, July 11. Please call me if you have any questions about this assignment. Thanks.

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

This memo is a reminder, the purpose of which is to alert the reader of the forthcoming due date. **When sent in plenty of time, memos can be used to alert the department heads to begin working on the assignment long before it is due.** This memo tells both the date and time that these reports are due. **Setting a specific time such as the noon hour as the deadline solicits more cooperation than setting a date only.** The memo also tells *where* the reports are to be sent, leaving no doubt that Sam Higgins expects to have it delivered to his office by the specified time.

Memos Should Never Communicate Anger

Sometimes fellow business people will commit acts that you may find frustrating and irritating. Sometimes even those who are slow to anger are treated in ways that they find inexcusable and unbearable. The natural tendency is to strike back and put the offending colleague in his or her place. Retaliations, however, have repercussions. A likely effect is that your retaliatory memo will provoke yet further retaliation. You don't want that. **In**

businesses, emotional wars are nonproductive. Even worse, they are counterproductive.

Your challenge is to find a way to communicate exactly what you need to communicate, not to get even, but to correct the situation (which may or may not be to modify your associate's behavior). For example, suppose you have a supervisor who, despite your two spoken reminders, continues to fall behind on preparing written reports. See Figure 11-3.

FIGURE 11-3

Memos that Handle Anger

TO: Thomas R. Petty
FROM: Judy Gaston
RE: Failure to Prepare Reports
DATE: February 7, 1991

In our earlier discussions on October 10 and October 27, I learned that you were behind in writing up the reports on some seventy asbestos screening examinations. At those meetings, I emphasized the significance that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration places on recordkeeping. Starting immediately, you must refrain from giving any further tests until you have completed and submitted to my office a report for each of those clients who has been tested. If you have any questions about this decision, please contact me. Thank you for your cooperation.

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

This memo concerns a very serious matter. Mr. Petty has failed to heed his superior's directions, and although he has been reminded of his failure, he ignores the reminder. In a sense, Ms. Gaston has a right to be upset, and it is only natural that she feels disappointed. But she wisely chose not to focus the attention of her memo on her anger and disappointment. Instead, she used the memo to recount the events that led to the problem. Further, her memo gives the reader directions, *explicit* directions.

Ms. Gaston invited Mr. Petty to come to her office to discuss this matter. She is still willing to support him, but she has set very firm limits on his activities. Specifically this memo does the following:

- Recaps the outcome of former meetings
- Reminds the reader why this matter is so serious
- Tells the reader exactly what to do
- Sets definite limits on the reader's behavior
- Keeps communications open
- Implies expected cooperation

Clearly, each and every part of this memo performs a distinct function, none of which is for releasing anger or providing an avenue for retaliation. Even the last line, which serves as a sign-off, also performs another function. It implies that the sender expects successful compliance with these mandates. The reader is more likely to comply when he perceives that he is expected to comply.

To make certain that your memos achieve their full potential, first decide what you want each memo to accomplish and then design it accordingly.

Deciding Whether to Write a Memo

Equally as important as the ability to write effective memos is knowing *when* to write and when *not* to write. Most business people readily admit that they probably should write more memos to recognize good work or spe-

cial efforts. There is no better way to solicit commitment, loyalty, and quality performance.

The decision to write, or to refrain from, writing letters to alter people's behaviors is equally important. Except in instances that threaten safety or major losses, seldom do first-time oversights warrant written communications. A friendly oral reminder usually suffices. When, however, first-time verbal attempts to correct behavior don't work, the second, and all subsequent, breaches of conduct should be followed up with a memo recounting the dates and nature of earlier attempts to curtail the behavior.

From this point in time, every verbal reminder should be followed by a memo. Together, these memos objectively depict the growth of the problem. Should the problem continue until it leads to a decision to dismiss, the memos will be invaluable evidence showing that you have been on top of the problem; you have repeatedly attempted to get it corrected; and despite these efforts, the offender continues to exhibit the behavior.

Writing Business Letters

Before writing a business letter, always answer two questions: (1) What is the main message that I want to communicate? (2) What effects do I want this letter to have on its recipient?

The purpose of every letter that has ever been written is to communicate a message. Unfortunately, some letters leave their recipients wondering what they have just read and why the letter was sent to them. You can do better.

First, write a short salutation. If, on the other hand, you want to express your appreciation, you may want a more personal opening. **Don't clutter your letter so that the main message is lost.** Begin by typing your

return address and the date. Skip four spaces and type in the addressee's name and address. Then skip two spaces and type the salutation.

If the person to whom you are writing has a business title, use it. If not, and you know the person's gender and name, address your letter to "Mr." or "Ms." Should you receive a response signed Mrs. or Miss, use this title in future communications. If you cannot tell the person's gender, you can use both names. For example, "Dear Chris Shepherd."

Using the general guidelines (brief, to the point, familiar words, and aimed at the desired effect), write the body of your letter.

Preparing Written and Oral Reports

Herb Smith opened his top desk drawer, reaching for the bottle of antacid tablets. Downing the last two, he thought, "I've got to watch my diet more carefully. I've run through this whole bottle in just over a week." Knowing that his stomach reacts to spicy foods but remembering that for the past two weeks his diet had been rather bland, Herb realized his problem. "Uh-oh. Now I know. It's time for the quarterly report."

Watson Enterprises places considerable emphasis on their quarterly reports, a lot more than Herb believes is necessary. In fact, Herb often complains to his wife that he could get a lot more work done if so much time weren't spent preparing those reports. Actually, Herb worries much more about the times he has embarrassed himself by giving low quality reports than he worries about the precious little time he spends preparing them.

Herb's Response

Turning to his secretary, Herb gave the following instructions: "Hold all of my calls for the next two hours.

I've got to write the report for the past quarter, and I haven't started. In fact, right now I don't know where to start. But, don't worry. I'll survive. I always do."

Analysis

Although Herb's behavior is common to many men and women in business, with a few changes in his approach to reporting, he could improve the quality of his reports while also saving on his medical bill.

All oral reporting has three parts. First, you must collect and organize your data. Next, you must write the report. Then, you must deliver it. Herb's first problem is his failure to *prepare* adequately. This is a very serious error because failing to prepare good reports is analogous to having done a good job then not taking time to collect your pay for the work.

Herb's second mistake is his *timing*. **Good reporting occurs throughout the reporting period, not at the tail end only.** The appropriate time to start preparing a report is the same day that the previous report was submitted. During the same day, take a few minutes to critique your last report. How could you improve it? What needed information was missing? Now, examine the report from your employer's perspective. Remember that **communications are never received exactly as they are intended**. What would help your audience better to appreciate the most important points in your report?

Herb's reaction to reporting is to downgrade the importance of all reports. This is how he protects his self-esteem. If, in general, reports are unimportant, then his poor preparation is justified. The fact is, Herb's company considers the reports important, and this alone, if nothing else, would make them important. Instead of reacting as Herb does, you can use the following steps to prepare your reports:

Steps for Preparing Written Reports

1. Begin by critiquing your last report; then make the necessary adjustments.
2. Identify the most important points in your report.
3. Clarify and emphasize these few points.
4. Briefly review the major points.

Collecting and Organizing Data

The writing of a good report is easy if the reporter establishes and maintains an effective system for collecting and organizing data. One effective system is the **proactive** system.

Herb could use a loose-leaf notebook that is partitioned with tabbed dividers, each section representing one of the company's major goals. In preparing the notebook, Herb needs to check for the company's list of goals, but he can find none. For some time, he has planned to write a set of strategic objectives for his department, but at the moment his department has no list of strategic objectives. If your department or company has a list of objectives, *prepare a tab for each strategic objective.* In the absence of a list of goals and objectives, Herb does check for the company's mission statement. He succeeds in locating the mission statement shown in Figure 11-4.

FIGURE 11-4

Watson Enterprises Mission Statement, 1-6-89

Watson Enterprises is an employee-owned conglomerate which receives no federal, state, or local governmental support. Thus, to exist Watson Enterprises must produce a profit. Since its inception in 1923, the survival and success of Watson Enterprises have depended on the quality of its products and services coupled with competitive pricing

and economical management. Watson's motto is "Customer satisfaction through satisfied employees." As an Equal Opportunity Employer, Watson Enterprises strives to treat all employees fairly and equitably.

Reviewing the company's mission statement, Herb marks a tab SERVICE, another tab PROFITS, another tab EMPLOYEE SATISFIERS, and another tab QUALITY. Throughout the reporting period, a copy of every letter from satisfied customers and a copy of any new policy or practice established to improve service should be placed in the service portion. Any other evidence that can be used to document that this department has performed well in the service area should be placed in this section of the report binder. For example, if two employees attended a workshop aimed at improving the participants' service skills, a copy of the program and a copy of the approved requests (either from the participating employee or initiated by Herb) should be placed in this section of the binder. Although they do not replace the need for gratuitous letters from satisfied customers, these entries are important because they give evidence that the department is attending to the service goal.

Data that will be used at the end of the period to determine profits and losses should be included in the PROFITS section. Memos complimenting employees should be placed in the EMPLOYEE SATISFIERS section. If some of the memos or letters compliment employees for good service, a copy of each of these should also be placed in the SERVICE section.

By taking a **proactive** stance, Herb can make the report task easier and improve the quality of his report. For example, throughout each reporting period he should

look for reasons to compliment Watson employees; he should use letters and written memoranda to do this. At times Herb may believe that verbal compliments are more effective than written comments in their ability to change employee behavior, and he may be right. But he doesn't have to choose between the two. When Herb does give verbal compliments, *he should follow each verbal compliment with a brief letter or memo.*

If one of Herb's superiors compliments him for his work or for the work of his department, Herb should consider responding with a memo of thanks for the recognition. Herb should include a copy of this memo in his report binder.

If Herb or another Watson employee speaks at a business meeting or receives a civic award, Herb should arrange for a photographer and reporter to be present, and include a copy of the news release or article in his report binder. When *someone else* pays a compliment to Herb or his department, it is better than Herb's tooting his own horn. By taking a **proactive** stance, Herb can and should arrange for this to happen.

Herb could —and you can, too —use latitude in recognizing performance through giving awards. If you do not already have on your agenda plans for an annual performance awards banquet, service awards banquet, or other awards events that focus on one of your company's main goals, consider planning such recognition events. **An important feature of the proactive stance is that while improving the quality of your reports it also improves the quality of your work and the quality of your employees' work.**

Side Note for Further Clarification

Julio Martinez is the dean of the college of teacher education at a regional university. Because the university is regional, its mission encompasses a 22-county service

area. Julio is encouraged to visit each city school superintendent and each county school superintendent in the region at least once annually. Additionally, Julio holds an annual awards banquet and two overnight retreats for superintendents. Julio follows each visit with a letter; these become evidence that he has visited all of these superintendents. He arranges for a reporter to cover each retreat and banquet. Copies of all letters and news articles and a list of those who attended, are entered into the SERVICE portion of Julio's report binder.

Susan Harris is also a dean of a large college of teacher education. Her college is part of a major research-type university. Since her university's mission de-emphasizes service and emphasizes research, Susan's report binder has no section on service. Instead, it has a major section titled RESEARCH. Throughout the year, Susan works hard encouraging and helping her faculty write grant proposals. She carefully documents each grant writing seminar, and she carefully records each proposal and each dollar generated through the grants written by her faculty. As her records accumulate, Susan adds them to the RESEARCH section in her report binder.

Writing the Report

Herb's use of the Watson company's mission statement, goals, and strategic objectives is no guarantee that his report adequately addresses the company's mission. You can do better than Herb. Check the major points in your report against the company's goals, objectives, and mission statement. To strengthen your report, consider the following guidelines:

- Focus on the company goals.
- Use graphs, charts, and other visuals.
- Keep your report short.

Keep your report succinct. Don't add any fluff; stick to the data needed to show in a convincing manner that

your department has succeeded in helping the company reach its goals.

Tailor an outline to match the chief areas of interest, such as these:

- Improved service
- Improved pricing system
- Quality control
- Operating costs

Herb wants to show that his department has made strides in all of these areas. He knows that his department has done a very good job this quarter with service, but he does not know how to convince his superiors of this. In contrast, Herb's department has done little to improve the pricing system and nothing at all to improve quality control. He can think of one operational change that has cut his travel costs, but not dramatically. Herb cannot think of a single thing that has been done during this reporting period to enhance employee satisfaction.

Herb's inclination is to write a long report to include every statement that he can think of, hoping that the "thoroughness" of the report will serve to convince his superiors that, overall, his department has had a good quarter. For those areas where no progress has been made, Herb is considering writing a few sentences to say that his department views these goals as important, and a few sentences more to assure his superiors that all of the employees in his department are committed to the goals.

When writing *your* report, focus your comments on those achievements that contribute to the company's goals. Be specific. The strength of your report depends on your ability to identify specific accomplishments and on your ability to communicate these accomplishments clearly and forcefully. Avoid the temptation to use unnecessarily complex language and syntax. Use familiar words

and keep your message straightforward and simple. Avoid any temptation to exaggerate.

Do not depend on adjectives and adverbs to impress your audience. You may feel that your department has done a truly *fantastic* job. But, *fantastic* is an expression of personal judgement. Your superiors want more, and they deserve more. **Avoid using such generalizations and expletives: *fantastic, wonderful, very successful,* and *highly successful!*** This reserve will force you to be specific and focus on those performances that led you to conclude that your department's performance *was* fantastic. Certainly there is nothing wrong with a department performing fantastically, but you want to *lead your employer and your superiors to draw this conclusion for themselves.*

The bulk of your report should be items of evidence to support your success message. Because detailed materials can clutter a report and cloud the main points in your message, use the evidence as back-up material to be placed at the end of the report in an appendix.

Suggested Approach

Herb's report can be improved if he remembers to do the following:

- Keep the written part of the report brief.
- Restrict the report to the major goals of the department.
- Use charts and diagrams to show gains in each area.
- Resist the temptation to overstate the success.
- Include an appendix with back-up materials to support all claims.

Delivering the Report

Because time is limited, most upper-management personnel will appreciate those written and oral reports that focus only on significant topics. Having prepared a good, brief presentation, you can pace yourself and slow down

when necessary for better understanding. Having an abundance of charts and graphs on transparencies gives you several advantages. First, it is a good confidence builder as it takes your audience's attention off of you and focuses it on your department's performance. Second, preparing a variety of charts, lists, and graphs lets you reinforce the successes of your department. Third, having plenty of transparencies removes your need to memorize your report. Using visuals makes you more confident, allows you to emphasize each important point and pause momentarily after each point is introduced, and enables you to keep eye contact with your audience.

Most transparencies should address only one major concept. Suppose you discover that compared to a year ago your department has responded to more requests for service, and during the same period your department has also made more courtesy visits. You could use the graph in Figure 11-5 to show these two concepts. A far better approach would be to provide separate transparencies. See Figures 11-6 and 11-7.

FIGURE 11-5

Courtesy Visits and Service Visits

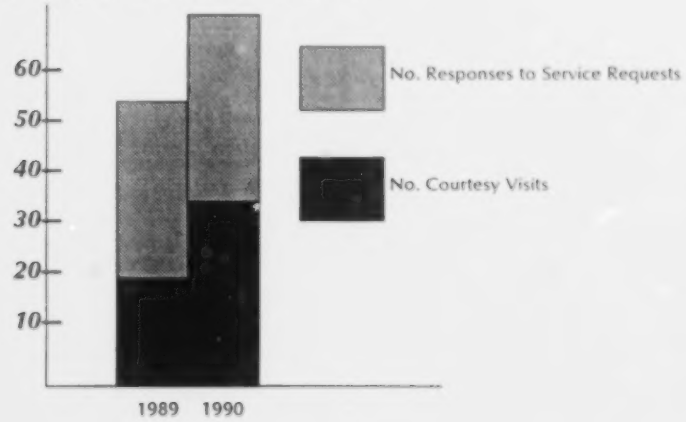


FIGURE 11-6

Responses to Service Requests

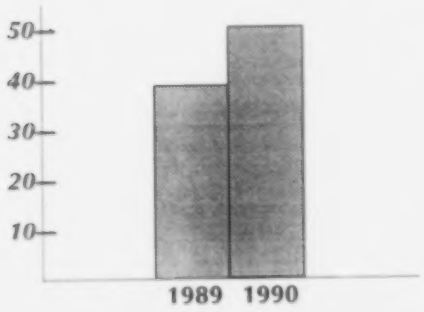


FIGURE 11-7

Courtesy Visits

Because the purpose of transparencies is to clarify your report and highlight the major points, the transparencies must be kept simple. Design them and show them so that they are easily visible to all, including those sitting on the back rows. When preparing the transparencies, you can improve the quality of both your transparencies and of your report by using the following transparency guidelines:

- Keep each transparency simple —only one concept (two if you need to show comparison)
- Use large letters, charts, and graphs—large enough to be seen from the back row.
- Make sure the projector is functioning properly and focus it before the audience arrives.
- Test a transparency by viewing it from the back of the room.
- Bring a pointer to focus the audience's attention on each specific concept as you explain it.

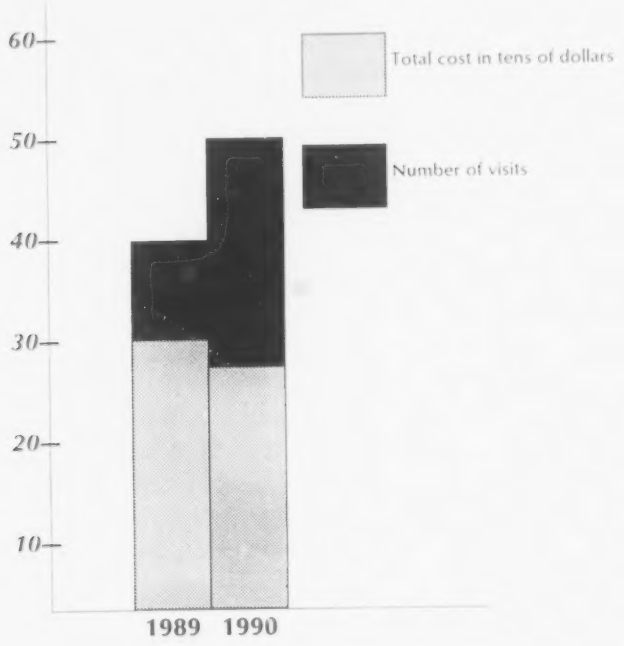
Audiences do not appreciate all those presenters who (1) arrive with poorly prepared visuals cluttered with invisibly small letters, (2) show these on a poorly focused screen while standing between the audience and the screen with their backs to the audience, and (3) point with their fingers as they talk. A pointer enables you to stand to the side of the screen and face your audience as you speak. You may choose to use either a small pointer (such as a sharp pencil) to point to the surface of the transparency or a long pointer (such as a telescopic pointer) to point to an object on the screen. Take care not to damage the screen; many screens are delicately coated and are easily damaged.

Multiple-concept transparencies can be useful to show contrast between two concepts. For example, suppose that Herb's department has designed some new travel routes, saving the company considerable dollars per cus-

tomer visit. The transparency shown in Figure 11-8 can enable him to show that his department has achieved the apparently impossible. Herb's department has achieved two goals that appear to be mutually contradictive, increasing the number of visits while decreasing the cost paid for transportation.

FIGURE 11-8

Increased Number of Visits/Decreased Cost per Visit



The Oral Presentation

Well-armed with transparencies, you can pace your presentation. You can face your audience with confidence, remembering to do the following:

- Adjust your projector ahead of time.
- Do not begin your speech until you are squarely facing the audience.
- Do not rush; do not talk while changing transparencies.
- Leave each transparency on the screen for as long as you are discussing it.

To adjust your projector, move it toward or away from the screen until the image exactly covers the screen. Turn the focus knob until a clear image is in focus. Close the window shades or blinds.

When showing your transparencies, leave each transparency mounted as long as it is being discussed. **Don't feel that you need to talk to fill in the brief periods when you are changing transparencies.** Remember that the purpose of each transparency is to help your listeners visualize a specific message; they cannot do this if you are mounting or removing the transparencies as you talk.

Using Handouts

With a supply of good transparencies you probably will not need to have handouts. Handouts usually compete with the speaker for the audience's attention, and they usually win! Should you deem it necessary to use handouts, **refrain from the temptation of talking to your audience while distributing the handouts.** When everyone has received a copy, "walk" your audience (even if it is only one person) through the handouts, directing attention to specifics so that the handouts will reinforce your verbal message rather than competing against it for the audience's attention.

At the end of your report, give a brief summary, addressing only the major points. A numbered list such as the one in Figure 11-9 can be effective. When finished, ask if further information or clarification is needed. If so, give it. If not, stop.

FIGURE 11-9

Quarterly Report for Sales and Service Department

Fall 1990

Compared to a year ago, this department has accomplished these results:

1. Increased responses to service calls by 1.2%
2. Increased number of courtesy visits by 8
3. Decreased travel costs per visit by $3.25
4. Increased number of courtesy phone calls by 30

Summary

The purpose of all communications is to communicate. Before writing a business memo or letter you should first determine the effect you want it to have and then design it accordingly. Attempts to use humor in written communications can confuse the audience.

The most frequently used forms of business writing are memoranda, letters, and reports. Memoranda are important because they are quick and easy to write and read.

Written reports should begin with the company's mission statement, followed by specific goals and objectives. The best reports are reasonably short and to the point.

Good oral reports are brief and substantive. Visual aids can improve the delivery. Transparencies should be limited to one concept per transparency unless a comparison is needed. When using the overhead projector, care should be taken to focus the projector ahead of time and position it the correct distance so that the image fits the screen. The speaker should not talk while changing the transparencies.

Recapping the Major Points

The most common types of good business correspondence have common qualities. It is easiest to communicate effectively if you have a clear purpose in mind before you start. Keep the following ideas in mind:

1. Determine the purpose and the intended effect of your communication before you start.
2. Avoid making grammatical errors.
3. Well written memos can communicate clearly and quickly.
4. Avoid using sarcasm.
5. Producing effective written or oral reports requires good preparation.

Chapter Twelve

BEYOND LUCK: PLANNING FOR SUCCESS

Many variables work together to determine an author's degree of success. Among these variables is—no doubt about it—luck. For example, at times editors receive several manuscripts that are so good that they want to select more than one; yet, these manuscripts are so similar that only one can be used. Those authors whose manuscripts are rejected because they happen to arrive when similar, equally good (but not better) manuscripts arrive are unlucky.

There are also times when writers have *good* luck. For example, often an editor has more than enough excellent manuscripts to fill an issue, but to make the desired journal size, the editor needs one very short manuscript. These editors may be forced to reject some superior manuscripts because they are a little too long to "finish out" this issue. An author who submitted a very short, mediocre manuscript may find the article accepted when the longer, but better, manuscripts are rejected. This author is lucky.

A seasoned author reflects on his early writing efforts!

> I remember when as a junior faculty member at a major university, I wanted desperately to have an article appear in a particular journal. My college had a wonderful media center and an equally wonderful laboratory school. I asked the director of the media center for photos taken of teachers and students at our laboratory school, promising to give the university and the media center credit for any photos used in the article.

The media center director led me to three file cabinet drawers filled with glossy black and white photos, offering me my choice and as many as I could use. I chose a couple of good close-ups that showed teachers and students actively involved in projects. As I closed the drawers, I thought, "If a couple of good photos would help get my manuscript accepted, four or five good photos should do twice as well." Then, I thought, "If four or five would help, a couple of dozen should make my article a shoo-in." After an hour of searching I left the center taking with me about two dozen excellent photos. I then sent all of them along with my very short manuscript to my favorite journal.

A few weeks later, as I checked my mail I noticed a package from this journal. This wasn't uncommon; I'd received many returned manuscripts from the editor, each accompanied with a letter complimenting me for the manuscript but saying that it didn't meet the journal's current needs. But this package was thicker. A message flashed—complimentary copies! Sure. My manuscript had been accepted and as with most professional journals this one paid the author by giving a few free copies of the journal carrying the author's article.

My hunch was correct. I quickly checked the contents section. Sure enough, there was my name. I immediately understood why actors fight over top billing. This table of contents was like a Las Vegas marquee. I quickly turned to my article and read it. It read well. Yet, it was very brief, and it didn't report any research. Rather, it reported some observations that I had made while living abroad, identifying some characteristics of American schools that seem to work against minority students.

Then it dawned on me that there were other articles in this issue; I wondered who wrote them. Maybe there were some well-known authors. Quickly checking the table of contents, I found several former presidents of the national association that published in this journal. Here I was, a junior, assistant professor listed with some of the biggest names in my field. My chest swelled. But as I scanned through the other articles, I sensed a familiar déjà vu. Then I realized why. Each of those manuscripts had one or two of *my* photos. They still carried our media center's name. Then a disturbing idea struck. I realized that my

manuscript wasn't accepted on the basis of its merits at all! It was accepted because the editor wanted to use all of these photos. But that was okay. I had made the big-time journal and at that moment anything else paled in importance. I knew I was lucky, but I was also very pleased.

Take a second look at what appears to be someone's good luck. You'll find that not luck but preparation, planning, and success-producing thinking preceded his good fortune. Take a second look at what appears to be someone else's bad luck. Look, and you'll discover certain specific causes of good or bad.

Good luck is always welcome, but, as in many other fields, in writing for publication luck is an overrated variable. Successful authors do not depend on good luck to bring them success nor do they use bad luck to explain or excuse their lack of success. Successful authors plan for success. **This chapter can help you plan a systematic writing program. Use it wisely and you won't need to rely so heavily on luck to make your writing program succeed.**

Managing Each Manuscript

Assuming that all writers have specific purposes for writing, **the chances of reaching their goals can be dramatically increased when writers clearly understand their goals**. More than merely being aware of these goals, writers should know their relative importance. Only then can the most appropriate journal for reaching each goal be identified.

In Chapter Eight, I described the wide variance in journal characteristics. For example, some journals are read

primarily by researchers while others are read almost exclusively by practitioners. Some journals have audiences of only a few hundred; other journals are circulated to hundreds of thousands of readers. **You need to search out your own major reasons (goals) for writing, and then select those journals that can best help you reach these goals.** You can use Figure 12-1 to (1) list and order your reasons for writing, (2) list and order those journals in which you would most like you work to appear, and (3) develop a profile for these journals.

FIGURE 12-1

Journal Profile

Reasons for Writing: Rank Ordered

Most Important:
Second Most Important:
Third Most Important:Others:

Journal Criteria: Rank Ordered

Most Important:
Second Most Important:
Third Most Important:
Others:

Journals that Score the Highest

Name of Journal	Refereed	Acceptance Rate	Months required for Decision	Number or Readers	Prestige (High, Average, Low)	Other	Other	Other

Sometimes writers are not sure of which journal they want to publish their manuscript. You can use the following steps to identify and order your preferred journals:

1) Identify several topics that you enjoy.
2) Identify two sets of journals: specialized and general.
3) Match these journals to these goals.
4) Rank your list of journals.
5) Refine your list (delete all unsatisfactory journals).

Now, let's take a closer look at each of these steps:

STEP 1. ***Identify topic areas.***

You should **identify several topic areas that appeal to you, areas on which you would like to write. Consider those areas that you know best**. As explained in Chapter Two, you can use a reference book such as *Readers' Guide* or *Education Index* to identify quickly those journals that are publishing articles on this topic. Following are six hints you can use to identify good topics:

1) Consider your undergraduate majors/minors.
2) Examine your dissertation or thesis *carefully*.
   a. Examine the content
   b. Who would be interested?
3) Consider other theses and reports.
4) Examine your job.
   a. Your major role as a teacher, administrator, supervisor, etc.
   b. Your grants
   c. Other accomplishments
5) Examine your life.
   a. Unusual experiences
   b. Interests or expertise in other fields
6) Examine your future.

a. What kind of job would you like to have in five years? Ten?

b. What are your retirement plans?

STEP 2. ***Identify two sets of journals: specialized and general.***

Many beginning writers insist that there are only one or two journals in their subject field. Granted, **some fields are much more limited than others**. Generally the more highly specialized your field, the fewer the journals in that field. For example, a marine biologist would find fewer marine biology journals than a general biologist would find biology journals. But just because your field is limited is no reason for *you* to be limited. A good solution for many subject majors is to identify a set of journals with a more general emphasis. For example, a marine biologist might have a list of one or two marine biology journals and also a list of general biology journals.

STEP 3. ***Match these journals to your goals.***

Periodically, you need to check your journals to see that they parallel your goals. For example, if one of your goals is to reach many people, some of the journals on your list should have large audiences. If one of your major goals is to shape the research in your field, you should be writing for journals that are read by graduate students and professional researchers. A marine biologist who is dedicated to conservation may wisely choose to include some journals written for campers, and other journals written for outdoor sports enthusiasts such as hunters and fishers.

STEP 4. ***Rank your list of journals.***

Because your goals continuously change, you should re-rank your journal list periodically. You may find it necessary occasionally to delete some journals and add new journals to both of your lists. Use the following four hints to rank your list of journals:

1) Consider your employer's expectations.
   a. Level of journal accepted: Does your employer recognize journals whose circulations are national? regional? state? local?
   b. Refereed? Non-refereed? Many employers, particularly higher education institutions, give credit only for refereed journals.
   c. Data-based? Non-data-based? Some employers recognize only articles that report the author's research.
2) Consider the journal's own characteristics.
   a. Acceptance rate. Do you need to get an article or two (or more) accepted quickly? Would several short articles appearing in practitioners' journals serve you better than, say, one scholarly article placed in a more prestigious research journal?
   b. Preferred topics
   c. Costs to author? Does the journal charge the author a reading fee? Page fees? Would your employer pay these fees for you?
3) Consider your own needs.
   a. Prestige
   b. Uses in classes you teach
   c. Promotion, tenure, merit pay
   d. Other
4) Plan your publications to achieve other goals.
   a. Grant writing
   b. Books
   c. Workshops
   d. Other

Each time you have an article accepted, immediately add it to your vita. When applying for a grant, always

attach a copy of your vita. This way, the articles give support and credibility to the grant proposal. (It works! So far, my grant proposals have generated over one million dollars.) Next, write articles about the funded projects. (Example: See the physics article in Chapter Eight.) Then, if you wish, you can frequently use both these articles and the research findings to prepare book chapters, as was explained earlier.

STEP 5. ***Refine your journal list.***

Old goals give way to new ones. You may find that the journals that match obsolete goals are no longer appropriate for you. Don't be reluctant to delete these journals from both of your lists.

Develop a Tracking System

The absolute necessity of getting several manuscripts in the mail was clearly emphasized in Chapter Nine: "What distinguishes highly successful writers from less successful writers?" The answer, of course, is that **highly successful writers write more, and they keep their manuscripts in the mail**.

As you increase your number of manuscripts, two things will happen that can complicate your life. At any point, you may find it difficult to remember which journal is currently considering one of your manuscripts and you may have trouble remembering the location and status of a particular manuscript: Have you sent a query letter? To whom? When? Has the editor responded? Was the response negative or positive? If positive, did you send the manuscript? When? Has the publisher acknowledged receipt of the manuscript? As you can see, the life of each manuscript has many stages.

As you get a half-dozen or more manuscripts underway, the logistics of tracking them becomes quite complex.

Should you fail to remember sending a manuscript to a particular publisher and then send a second manuscript to that same publisher, you may raise suspicion that you have tried all of the other publishers and that no other journals will accept your manuscripts. Knowing that no editors want their journals to be used as dumping grounds, purposefully try to avoid sending manuscripts to an editor who is already considering another of your manuscripts. Even worse would be to forget and send an older manuscript that has already been rejected by an editor back to the same editor; and if that isn't embarrassment enough, you could forget and commit the ultimate sin against an editor—sending the same manuscript to be considered simultaneously by two different journals.

To avoid these unpleasant and highly damaging situations, you need two types of tracking systems. **For each of your manuscripts you should set up a file folder.**

This folder provides a convenient place to keep your earlier drafts and the notes you used when writing these drafts. Much time is wasted when notes are misplaced. Authors often spend more time searching for incomplete documentary information than they spend reviewing the literature. This is a big, unnecessary waste. The folder can help avoid this waste.

In addition to providing a way to locate your original of the manuscript and related information, **the folder can become an excellent system for tracking the manuscript through its publication life.**

Start by writing the title of the article on the tab where a gummed label is commonly affixed. A bold marker makes it much easier to locate the file than the usual typed label. On the inside of the folder, begin the tracking form recommended in Figure 12-2. Enter the names of those journals to which you plan to send this manuscript, listing them in descending order of preference.

FIGURE 12-2

Individual Manuscript Tracking Form

Article Sent to:	Date	R/A*	Query Letter Sent	MS Sent
The Clearing House	*12/1/85*	*R*	*7/15/85*	*7/21/85*
Contemporary Ed	*4/2/86*	*A*	*12/2/85*	*12/18/85*
Educational Horizons				
College & University Teaching				
The High School Journal				

*Rejected/Accepted

From having read this journal and by looking up "Inquiry Learning" in the *Education Index*, you will discover that *The Clearing House* would tend to be interested in this topic. You also know that they like this topic because you have seen that they have published other articles on other teaching methods. Suppose further that you remember seeing articles on "discovery learning" and articles on "simulations and games" in *Contemporary Education;* list this journal as your second preference.

Notice that now you have listed five possible journals for this manuscript. Although you may have sent previous manuscripts on teaching methods to *The Clearing House* and your articles have had a good record of acceptance by this journal, don't depend on the past. Instead, **because the manuscript is now fresher in your memory than it will be at a later time**, make a ranked list of appropriate journals for this manuscript. Should the manuscript be rejected, knowing immediately where to send it next will save much time and will decrease the amount of time that the manuscript stays on your desk. (The importance of keeping a manuscript in the mail was stressed in Chapter Nine.)

In Figure 12-2, notice that the first query letter for this manuscript was sent on 7/15/85. Oops! Your predic-

tion was wrong; *The Clearing House did* reject the manuscript. So now you are glad that you prepared the folder with the ranked list of journals. Otherwise, you probably could not have managed to get the query letter off to *Contemporary Education* in the next day's mail.

How important is having a tracking folder for each article? To the author, it is imperative. In two decades of writing for journals, I have never processed a single manuscript without a tracking folder. I hope you will find this design as useful as I have. If not, experiment a little; you can design a folder that will work equally well, or better, for you. You can always do better!

Tracking Multiple Manuscripts

Each year at writing workshops, I learn that for many writers sending simultaneous submissions is common practice.

As mentioned earlier, **the ultimate sin against an editor is to send the same manuscript simultaneously to more than one journal. The ultimate embarrassment and damage to your reputation with an editor occur when both publishers accept the manuscript for use in their respective journals**. At one time, I did not know better. Because of an unusually long publisher's delay, and because I had many manuscripts in the mail at the same time, I found myself in this embarrassing situation. At that point, I clearly saw a need to track simultaneously all of my manuscripts, so I developed the system shown in Figure 12-3.

FIGURE 12-3
Multiple Tracking System

Author(s)	Article	Date Article was Sent	Journal
Henson	Inquiry Learning: A New Look	1/8/86	Contemporary Ed.
Henson	Corporal Punishment: Ten Myths	1/9/86	The High School Journal
Balantine & Henson	Back to Basics: Skills Needed	1/11/86	Contemporary Education
Henson/Buttry/Chissom	Middle Schl as Prcvd by Cntmpry Tchrs	2/2/68	Middle School Journal
Block & Henson	Mast Lng & Middle Sch Instruct	2/3/86	American Middle School Jnl
Henson/Chissom/Riley	Impro. Instr in Middle Schools	2/5/86	AMSE
Henson	Publishing Textbooks & Monographs	3/3/86	Thresholds in Education
Henson & Morris	Perspectives, Insights & Direction	3/3/86	Thresholds in Education
Henson/Coulter/Harrell	The UA Summer Inst for Physics Tchrs	3/8/86	The Physics Teacher
Henson/Saterfiel	How to Get Good Research Data	3/10/86	Amer Sch Board Jnl
Henson/Buttry/Chissom	Middle Schl Tchr as a Mbr of Cmty	4/2/86	Middle School Jnl

In Chapter Six I recommend that you identify a few journals in your area and become familiar with each. In time, that list will grow. A list of your manuscripts, such as the one in Figure 12-3, will enable you to see at a glance which of your manuscripts you have pending at each of your target journals.

For example, the practical benefit of this list and the ease with which it can be used are readily obvious. Just a quick glance reveals some duplications at two of the journals. You will remember that generally this is a poor practice. But, both of these instances involve *invited* manuscripts. This makes a big difference; **have no reluctance to send more than one manuscript to a publisher if the second manuscript is requested by the editor.**

As manuscripts are rejected, mark through that journal title and, looking at the manuscript tracking form, query the next journal. If you receive a positive response to a query letter, then send the manuscript to the next journal.

Summary

When carefully planned, writing for publication enables authors to reach many professional and personal goals that they could not otherwise reach. But the setting and reaching of these goals require careful planning. Whether each of your goals will be reached will be determined in part by the types of manuscripts you write, the topics you choose to write about, the journals to which you submit your manuscripts, and *especially* by the number of manuscripts you write.

As your number of manuscripts increases, so does your need for a system to track them. Making a folder for each manuscript is a must. Equally important, you need a system to show you where all of your manuscripts reside

at any time. In this chapter I have discussed the preparation of each of these systems. These tracking systems are simply constructed but highly utilitarian; they work! With a little thought about the uniqueness of your own professional and personal goals, you can either develop your own personalized systems or you can modify these systems so that they work for you.

Recapping the Major Points

Success is achieved when you reach your goals. The information in this chapter helps you use writing to reach your goals. The following points are worth remembering:

1. Writing can help you reach professional and personal goals, but only if your goals are clear and your writing program is synchronized with these goals.
2. Success through writing requires extensive writing. As your number of manuscripts increases, your need for a system to track your manuscript increases.
3. A simple manila folder can provide a safe place for your manuscript and related information. Correctly designed, it can also provide an easy system for tracking the manuscript.
4. You should use your goals as criteria for choosing article topics and for choosing journals for your manuscript.
5. Identifying several journals for a manuscript at the time it is written can save turnaround time should your first-choice journal reject the manuscript.
6. Simultaneously placing two manuscripts at the same journal can jeopardize the acceptance of each; simultaneously placing copies of the same

manuscript at two different journals can destroy your relationship with one of these publishers.

7. Luck can play an important part in an author's success, but without planning, *good* luck is a stranger to most writers.

INDEX

A

Ability to Write 173-174
Aburdene 5
Active Writing 50
Advance, Author's 203
Agents 210-212
Anger, Role in Memos . . 224-225
Application
  Need for Showing 74
  Examples Of 75-78
  Techniques for Showing . . 149
Armstrong, David G. 196
Article Length 98
Astaire, Fred 42
Attention, Need to Capture (See Hooks) 29, 33, 35-37
Audience, Importance of Knowing 132-133
Authors
  Characteristics of, Boldness 173
  Characteristics of, Confident 175
Author-editor Relationships 156-157
Axioms 72

B

Baughman, M. Dale 193
Benefits of Writing 4
Book Contracts 190-220
Book Prospectus
  Author Description . . 201-202
  Book Description 198
  Characteristics, List of . . . 191
  Competition, Description of the 199-200
  Content Comparison Chart 201
  Market Description 199
Books in Print 202
Book Review 181
Book Writing: Choosing the Right Book to Write 190-191
Book Writing: Developing a Prospectus 191
Bottom Line Writing 223
Brevity
  Need for 170
  Need in Memos 222-223
Business Guide 113
Business Journals, Preferences of 158-159
Business Letters 227
  Steps in Writing 227-228
Business Writing 221-242
  General Guidelines . . 221-222
  Role of Humor 222

C

Call for Manuscripts 103

Chapter Outline for Books 192-197
Check Your Manuscript, Need to 152
Chronicle of Higher Education, The 36
Chunking 70
Clarifying Nature of Writing . . 4
Clarity
Need for 8-9
Effect on Acceptance . . . 47-48
Exercises to Develop . . . 48-54
Techniques for Achieving 47-55
Clemens, Samuel 145
Clichés 142, 186
Co-authors (See Collaborating) 179-180
Collaborating 179-180
Colleagues Read Manuscript, Need for 152
Colloquialisms 186
Coming Themes, Announcements of 106-108
Competition 199
Computer Search 24
Conciseness
Role in Making Writing Clear 49
Role in Making Writing Powerful 47-48
Consultants, As Sources of Topics 25
Contracts (See Book Contracts) 190-203
Contract Negotiation . . . 212-218
Conventions, Using 25
Cooks as Organizers 60
Correspondence, Considering the Intended Effects 221-222
Cover Letter
Definition 170
Cover Letter
Sample . . . . . 122 (Fig. 6-10), 123 (Fig. 6-11), 171 (Fig. 8-7)
Cover Letters 170-172
Advantages to Authors 170-171
Developmental Steps . 170-171
Craftsmanship, Effect on Acceptance 45-46
Creativity 38-39
Creative Nature of Writing . . . 4
Critique by Colleagues 152
Cross Creek, ... 145

D

Deadlines 203-205
Dickens, Charles 7, 8
Dissertations 18-21
Dunn, Rita 136

E

Editing Exercises
Advanced 55
For Clarity 48-49
For Positive Writing . . . 50-52
For Gender Fairness . . . 55-57
Editors, Communicating With 156-172
Editing, Role in Writing . . . 48-50
Education Index 113, 247
Education Journals, Preferences of 161
Elements of Style, The 142
Eloquence 5
Emotion, Role in Business Writing 221-222
Errors, Authors' Most Common 131-154

Excuses for Not Writing (See Reasons for Not Writing, List of) 43-44
Exhilarating Nature of Writing 11
Expectations of Editors, Ways to Determine 155-163
Experience as a Source of Topics 117

F

File Folder (See Individual Manuscript Tracking Form) 252
First Sentence (See Lead Sentences, Writing) 34-37
Fitzgerald, F. Scott 145
Forecasting the Future . . . 25-27

G

Genders, Treating Fairly . . 55-57
Generic Journals 248
Goals
  Need for 3, 14
Gore, Tipper 29-30
Grammatical Errors 221
  Effect on Manuscript Acceptance 137
Graphs, When to Use 180
Grey, Zane 145
Guidelines for Authors . . 100-103

H

Halpin, Girald 137-138
Halpin, Glenelle 137-138
Handicaps 43-47
Handouts 240
Hemmingway, Ernest 145
Hochheiser, Robert 194
Hooks, Using 29, 33, 35-37
How to Work for a Jerk . . . 194-195
Humor, Use of 193, 194

I

Index Cards, Use in Paragraphing 38
Individual Manuscript Tracking Form 252

J

Jargon 48
Job, Source of Topics . . . 21-22
Journals
  Using 97-114
  Article Length 98
  Physical Characteristics . 97-98
  Reading Level 100

K

Kilpatrick, James J. 132, 192-194

L

Lead Paragraphs 34-37
Lead Sentences, Writing . . 34-37
Letter Writing (See Business Letters) 227-228
Library, Use to Determine Journal Preferences 189
Libraries
  Using for Choosing Target Journals 163
  Using for Topic Identification 111
Lists, Using 70, 74
Literary Market Place 202
Luck 243-245

M

Management System, Manuscript 245-246

Manuscript Guidelines (See Guidelines for Authors) . . 100-114

Megatrends 2000 5

Memos

- Purposes of 224
- Decision to Write 222
- Sample 223, 225
- Use of 221-223
- Designing 223

Mistakes

- Chart for Avoiding Common 142
- Writers' Most Frequent 132-142

Multiple Submissions (See Simultaneous Submissions) . . 179

Myths, Writing 43-44

N

Naisbitt 5

Names of Authors, Effect on Acceptance 45-46

National Businesswoman, The 10

Negotiation (See Contract Negotiation) 212-218

"Not Right for Our Journal," 133

O

On Writing Well, ... 131

Opening Paragraph, Using to Hook Readers 144

Oral Reports

- Delivering 235-241
- Preparing 228-230

Organizing Articles 59-96

Outline, Use in Organzing 38-39

P

Paradoxes and Promises . . . 66-70

Paragraphing 37-38, 91-93

- Guidelines 92-93

Paragraph Sequencing 94-95

Perkins, Maxwell 145

Personal Journal Profile 245-246

Personal Quality in Business Writing 221-222

Phi Delta Kappa 212

Physics Teachers Program . . . 149

Pickins, Alexander 143

Places for Writing, The Best 13-14

Positive Writing 50-54

- Exercises In 50, 51

Power in Writing 6

Powerful Writing 47-54

Preparing Manuscripts for Mailing 107-108

Proactive Writing 231

Professional Societies, Using . . 27

Professional Yearbooks 27

Promises to Readers 31, 36

Pros and Cons, Using 63-64

Prospectus (See Book Prospectus) 191-193

Provincialism, Role in Nonfiction 145

Publisher's Preference Chart, Sample 204-205

Publishing Expenses, Should Authors Pay? 185

Publishing Time 205

Q

Query Letters 163-170
Sample . . . . . 168 (Fig. 8-6)
Advantages to Authors 163-164
Definition Of 163
Techniques for Writing . . . . 163-170 (Fig. 8-3)
Questionnaires 118-120
Questionnaire to Editors, Sample 118-120
Questionnaire to Middle School Teachers 125-127
Questions, Most often Asked 173-188

R

Raising PG Kids in an X-Rated Society 29-30
Rating Scales 108-111
Definition 108
Use to Authors 108
Sample 109
Rawlings, Marjorie 145
Raymond, James 131
Readers' Guide 247
Reasons People Give For Not Writing, List of 43-44
Reasons for Writing 173-174
Reasons to Write 3-9
Refereed Journal, Definition 181-182
Refereeing, Table for 182
Referencing Articles and Books 139
Reference Books 23-24
Referencing, Using 69
Rejection 14
Rejections, How to Handle 177-178
Report Time 203
Reports
Preparing 228-235
Written, Steps in Preparing 228
Research Journals, Writing for 138-139
Responsibilities of Editors to Readers 62
Reviewers' Guidelines 108
Revising Titles, Need for . . 33-34

S

Sacrifice, Need for 10
Samson, Joan 8
Sarcasm 222
Scientific Method, Style of 138-139
Selecting a Book Publisher 202-205
Selecting Target Journals (See Target Journals, Selecting) . . 143
Self-addressed, Stamped Envelope 102
Self-confidence 18, 38
Self-denial 9, 10
Self-discipline 9
Self-improvement 4, 5
Self-publishing
Disadvantages of 184
Success Story 184-185
Sevareid, Eric 6
Sex Discrimination (See Genders, Treating Fairly) . . 55-57
Simplicity, Role of 46-47
Simultaneous Submissions . . 179
Specialist vs. Generalist, Writing 185-186
Speeches, Using 25-26
Steinbeck, John 6-7, 8

Straight Fees 212
Street, James 145
Strunk, William, Jr. 142
Style 42-58
Styles of Journals,
Variance In 132-133
Subheading 79-85
Substance
Failure to Include 137-140
Importance of 61
Techniques for Achieving 61-74
Substantive Writing (See
Substance) 62
Success Story, Favorite . . 175-177
Successful Writers,
Characteristics of . . . 174-175, 178
Super-Writers 131
Surveys 118-121
Symbiotic Relationship between
Authors and Editors . . . 156-157

T

Table of Contents 194-195
Tables, When to Use 180
Target Journals
Identifying 112-117
Selecting 143
Teachers in Residence
Program 147-149
Telephoning Editors 157
Themes
As a Way to Learn Editors'
Expectations 106-108
Ways to Identify
Coming 143-144
Time to Write, Finding 10-12
Times for Writing, The Best . . . 9
Titles
Choosing 29-34
As Guides to Authors 33
Tools
Writing 12-14
List of 13
Topics, Identifying 17-28
Tracking Multiple
Manuscripts 253-255
Tracking System 250-255
Transparencies
Preparing 236-239
Using 240

U

USA Today 79, 84

V

Vanity Publishing
Definition 183
Disadvantages of . . . 183-184

W

Welty, Eudora 145
White, E. B. 142
Workshops 9,10
Advantages of 187
Writer's Art, The, . . . 132, 192-194
Writing As an Unnatural
Act 171
Writer's Market 202, 211
Writing Often,
Importance of 38-39
Writing, Reasons for 3-9

Y

Yearling, The 145

Z

Zinsser, William 131

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